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HERMAN
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THE CANDIDATE

A

HUMOROUS POLITICAL DRAMA

IN FOUR ACTS

BY

GUSTAVE FLAUBERT

VOLUME VIII.

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THE CASTLE OF HEARTS

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JEANNE APPEARS, IN THE DRESS OF A MILKMAID, BESIDE THE STATUE. SHE CLIMBS UP AND CLASPS PAUL IN HER ARMS 130

THE CANDIDATE

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

ROUSSELIN, aged 56.
MUREL, aged 34.
GRUCHET, aged 60.
JULIEN DUPRAT, aged 24.
COUNT DE BOUVIGNY, aged 65.
ONÉSIME, his son, aged 20.
DODART, a notary, aged 60.
PIERRE, servant to M. Rousselin.
MADAME ROUSSELIN, aged 38.
LOUISE, her daughter, aged 18.
MISS ARABELLA, an English governess, aged 30.
FÉLICITÉ, servant to Gruchet.
MARCHAIS.
HEURTELOT.
LEDRU.
HOMBOURG.
VOINCHET.
BEAUMESNIL.
A VILLAGE POLICEMAN.
PRESIDENT OF THE ELECTORAL UNION.
A WAITER.
A BEGGAR.

Peasants, Workmen, etc.

The action takes place in a village.

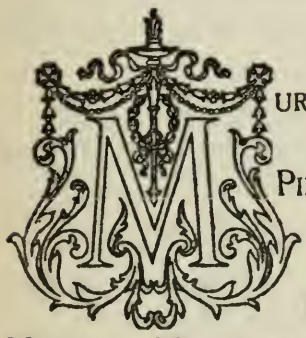
ACT I.

Scene: *A garden before the house of* M. Rousselin. *A pavilion,* R. *An iron gate,* L.

Scene I.

(Murel, Pierre, *and a servant*

Pierre *stands,* C., *unfolding a newspaper. Enter* M. Murel, L., *carrying a large bouquet, which he hands to* Pierre.)



UREL: Pierre, where is Monsieur Rousselin?

PIERRE: In his study, Monsieur Murel. The ladies are in the park, I believe, with Monsieur Onésime de Bouvigny and the English governess.

MUREL: Monsieur Onésime de Bouvigny—that half-cracked idiot! I will wait here until he has gone, because I detest the very sight of him.

PIERRE: And I also, Monsieur.

MUREL: You? And why?

PIERRE: Because he is a snake, besides being a braggart and a boaster. And then, too, I have an idea that he comes here on account of [*mysteriously*] Mademoiselle!

MUREL [*in a half whisper*]: What! Mademoiselle Louise?

PIERRE: Yes, Monsieur. Unless I am greatly mistaken, these Bouvignys, father and son, being noblemen, would not come bowing and scraping before a mere *bourgeois* like Monsieur Rousselin, except for the reason I have just mentioned.

MUREL [*aside*]: The deuce! I must look into this. [*Aloud*] Listen, Pierre. Some gentlemen will arrive at the house soon to have an interview with your master, Monsieur Rousselin. Do not fail to let me know the moment they come. I will wait here.

PIERRE: Several gentlemen, did you say, Monsieur Murel? And—do they bring news regarding the election? They say that—

MUREL: Enough! Listen to me! You will do me the favour to go immediately to Heurtelot, the bootmaker, and beg him for my sake—

PIERRE: *Beg* him—for *your* sake, Monsieur Murel!

MUREL: Pay attention, I tell you! Say to him that he must forget nothing.

PIERRE: Oh, I begin to understand!

MUREL: And that he must be exact in every particular of the instructions he has received, as he is a leader of his class.

PIERRE: I understand perfectly, Monsieur. I will go at once. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

MUREL [*to* M. Gruchet, *who enters,* L.]: Ah! it is Monsieur Gruchet, if I am not mistaken.

GRUCHET: Yes, in person — Pierre-Antoine Gruchet, at your service, Monsieur.

MUREL: Your visits at this house have become very infrequent of late, it appears to me.

GRUCHET: That is not to be wondered at, considering the change we find in our old friends, the Rousselins. Since they have become so very intimate with these De Bouvignys — and a pretty pair they are!—they put on too many airs to please me.

MUREL: Too many airs? What do you mean?

GRUCHET [*after a slight pause*]: Haven't you noticed that their servants now wear buckskins, and that Madame never drives out without two horses? And at dinner — at least, so my maid Félicité informs me — they have all the knives, forks, and spoons changed at each course.

MUREL: But all this does not alter the fact that Monsieur is just the same kindly, generous fellow he always was.

GRUCHET: Certainly not — he is more foolish than blamable. But it is surely a crowning piece of folly for him to show so wild a desire to obtain a deputyship. They say he is forever declaiming and gesticulating before a mirror, and that he even murmurs parliamentary expressions in his sleep!

MUREL [*laughs*]: Really?

GRUCHET: The title of deputy sounds extremely well, you know. When your name is announced: "Monsieur the Deputy So-and-So" — what a fine effect is produced! Every one salutes you. On one's visiting card, the word "Deputy" comes after the name — how agreeable to the eye! And in travelling, or at the theatre — anywhere, in

fact — if any trouble arises, if some person should be insolent to you, or even if a policeman should lay his hand upon your shoulder, you draw yourself up and say, with an air, "Monsieur, you evidently do not know that I am a deputy!"

MUREL: Ha! ha! ha! [*Aside*] You wouldn't mind being one yourself, my good friend!

GRUCHET: After all, we must not laugh too much at our friend Rousselin's aspirations. If a man has a comfortable house, a few good friends, and a fair amount of tact, he is sure to get on well.

MUREL: Ah, if Monsieur Rousselin succeeds in getting the nomination —

GRUCHET: Well, if he should, what then? He will be the candidate only of the middle class.

MUREL [*aside*]: Who knows?

GRUCHET: We ought not to be expected to support him, you and I. You see, we are Liberals, and your position, naturally, gives you an influence over the working classes. To be sure, I think you show them rather more consideration than is necessary. I, too, am a friend of the people, but not quite so enthusiastic a friend as you.

MUREL: Well, let us suppose that Rousselin should present his own name —

GRUCHET: I should vote against him.

MUREL [*aside*]: I was right to be discreet! [*Aloud*] But, holding such views regarding Monsieur Rousselin, how is it that you care to come to his house?

GRUCHET: I have come here to-day simply to do a slight service for young Julien — you know him.

MUREL: The editor of *The Impartial?* And how does it happen that you have become the friend of a poet?

GRUCHET: We are not exactly friends. I meet him occasionally at the club, and he has asked me to introduce him to Monsieur Rousselin and his family.

MUREL: He asked *you* to do this, instead of addressing himself to me, one of the stockholders of *The Impartial?* What could have been his reason?

GRUCHET: I'm sure I don't know.

MUREL [*aside*]: That is very strange! [*Aloud*] Well, my friend, I fear that this idea of presenting Monsieur Julien is not a very happy one for you.

GRUCHET: Why do you say that?

MUREL [*looks off,* L., *paces to and fro, then aside*]: Confound that rascal Pierre! he has not yet returned. [*Aloud*] I said it simply because I know that Monsieur detests Bohemians.

GRUCHET: But this particular one—

MUREL: That particular one above all others, I assure you. Only a week ago—[*Draws out his watch and looks at it anxiously*]

GRUCHET: What is troubling you? You appear very restless.

MUREL: I am, indeed.

GRUCHET: Business affairs, perhaps.

MUREL: Yes,—my own affairs.

GRUCHET: Ah, I thought so! I am not at all surprised.

MUREL: Now I shall have the pleasure of listening to a moral lecture, I suppose!

GRUCHET: Oh, I know all about the saddle-horses, the cabs, the hunting-parties, picnics, and all the rest of it. Good heavens, man! when a young

fellow is simply a representative of a company, he cannot live as if he kept the cash-box in his pocket.

MUREL: Nonsense! I intend to pay all that I owe.

GRUCHET: Meanwhile, if you find yourself embarrassed, why not borrow of our friend Rousselin?

MUREL: Impossible!

GRUCHET: You have borrowed of me, you know, and I am not so rich as he.

MUREL: Yes, I know, but Monsieur Rousselin—that is quite a different matter.

GRUCHET: How is it different?—with a man so generous as he, so ready to serve his friends! [*Short pause*] There is something under all this. You have a reason, my fine fellow, for not wishing to injure your credit in this house.

MUREL: What do you mean?

GRUCHET: You are trying to make yourself agreeable to Mademoiselle Rousselin, hoping that a good marriage will—

MUREL: Oh, the devil! Hold your tongue! Yes, I adore her! Hush! here comes Madame Rousselin. For heaven's sake, not a hint of this!

GRUCHET [*aside*]: Oh, ho! you adore her, eh? My opinion is that your adoration is directed chiefly towards her *dot!*

SCENE III.

(*The same. Enter* Madame Rousselin, *through the gate, leaning on the arm of* Onésime de Bouvigny; *followed by* Louise Rousselin *and* Miss Arabella; *the latter carries a book*)

MUREL [*presents his bouquet to* Mme. Rousselin]: Permit me, Madame, to offer you—

MME. ROUSSELIN [*takes bouquet and tosses it upon a round table standing* L.]: Thank you, Monsieur.

ARABELLA: Oh, what splendid gardenias! Where do you find such beautiful flowers, Monsieur Murel?

MUREL: At my home, Miss Arabella, in my conservatory.

ONÉSIME [*with an impertinent air*]: Have you a conservatory, Monsieur?

MUREL: Yes, Monsieur,—a hot-house.

LOUISE: And it costs him nothing to make himself agreeable to his friends.

MME. R.: If one could only forget his political preferences!

MUREL [*aside to* Louise]: Your mamma is rather cold to me to-day.

LOUISE [*aside to* Murel]: Oh, never mind!

MME. R. [*sits,* R., *beside a small table*]: Come and sit beside me, my dear Vicomte. Won't you join us, Monsieur Gruchet? [*The gentlemen indicated sit near her*] Well, have they found a satisfactory candidate at last? Tell me all the news.

GRUCHET: A great many things have happened, Madame. The most important—

ONÉSIME [*interrupts*]: My father declares that Monsieur has only to allow his own name to be presented—

MME. R.: Indeed! Is that really his opinion?

ONÉSIME: Without a doubt. And all our peasants, who know well that their interests are in accord with his ideas—

GRUCHET: Which differ a little, however, from the principles of 'eighty-nine.

ONÉSIME [*laughs loudly*]: Ha! ha! ha! the immortal principles of 'eighty-nine!

GRUCHET: May I ask what you are laughing at, Monsieur?

ONÉSIME: Why — why — my father always laughs when he hears that expression.

GRUCHET: Well, I assure you, without 'eighty-nine and its immortal principles, we should have had no deputies at all.

ARABELLA: You are quite right, Monsieur Gruchet, to defend the parliament. When a gentleman becomes a member of that body, it is in his power to do a great deal of good.

GRUCHET [*to* Mme. R.]: One of the greatest advantages is that one may live in Paris during the winter.

MME. R.: And that is certainly an important consideration. Louise, my dear, come and sit near us. A long sojourn in the country becomes very tiresome, does it not, Monsieur Murel?

MUREL [*with animation*]: Yes, indeed, Madame. [*Aside to* Louise] It is quite possible, however, to be very happy in the country sometimes!

GRUCHET: One would think that this simple rural spot was agreeable to no one but persons of little sense!

ARABELLA: Oh, no, no, Monsieur! A person of true sentiment must feel his heart throb with pleasure when he finds himself in the deep shadow of these ancient forests; sweet thoughts must possess him when he gazes across these wide fields; and perhaps — who knows? — in some obscure corner of this village a bright intellect is hidden, — some one whose genius will one day dazzle

the world! [*Sits, and assumes a pose of sentimental reverie*]

MME. R. [*satirically*]: What a romantic tirade, my dear! Really, you are in a more poetic mood than usual to-day.

ONÉSIME: I think Mademoiselle has just favoured us with a quotation — in admirable fashion, except for a very slight accent — from *The Lake*, by Monsieur de Lamartine.

MME. R.: Indeed. Do you know the work well?

ONÉSIME: No, Madame. I was never allowed to read the works of that author.

MME. R.: Ah, yes, of course. Your education was of a more serious nature. [*Takes a skein of wool from the table and indicates to* Onésime *that he is to hold up his hands in order that she may pass the skein over them. He obeys, and she begins to wind the wool into a ball*] Will you have the kindness to assist me, my dear Vicomte? Please keep your arms well extended — there, that will do perfectly.

ONÉSIME: Oh, I know how to perform this delightful office, Madame. [*Slight pause, as* Mme. Rousselin *winds the wool*] We were speaking of rural scenery just now, — do you know, I admire exceedingly that little landscape framed in pearls that my sister Elizabeth sent to you.

MME. R.: It is, indeed, a charming work of art. It is now hanging in my boudoir. [*Sharply, looking at* Louise] Louise, when you have *quite* finished looking at that magazine, I wish to speak to you.

MUREL [*aside*]: She certainly suspects me!

MME. R.: I greatly admired the delightful talents of your other sisters also, Vicomte, the last time

that we had the pleasure of visiting the Château de Bouvigny.

ONÉSIME: You are very kind, Madame. My mother expects to receive very soon a visit from my great-uncle, the Bishop of Saint-Giraud.

MME. R.: Is the Bishop of Saint-Giraud your uncle, Monsieur?

ONÉSIME: Yes, Madame, and he is also my father's godfather.

MME. R.: Ah, I fear the dear Count, your father, has quite forgotten us by this time—naughty man!

ONÉSIME: Not at all, I assure you, Madame. In fact, I know that he intends very soon to ask Monsieur Rousselin to grant him an interview.

MME. R. [*pleased*]: Ah!

ONÉSIME: He wishes to consult Monsieur Rousselin about a certain undertaking. [*Looks off*] Is not that Monsieur Dodart approaching the house?

MUREL [*aside, looking off*]: The notary! Can it be possible that--

ARABELLA: Yes, it is he. And look! there come Marchais, the grocer, Monsieur Boudois, Monsieur Liégeard, and several other persons.

MUREL [*aside*]: The devil! What can this mean?

SCENE IV.

(*The same. Enter* M. Rousselin.)

LOUISE [*jumps up and runs to* M. Rousselin]: Ah! it is papa!

ROUSSELIN [*with a complacent smile*]: Look well at him, my child. You may now indeed be proud

of him! [*Embraces* Mme. R.] Good-morning, my dearest!

MME. R.: What has happened? You look absolutely radiant.

ROUSSELIN [*sees* Murel]: You here, my good Murel? You have heard the news, I suppose,—and you wished to be the first to greet me.

MUREL: I confess I do not understand you, Monsieur.

ROUSSELIN [*sees* Gruchet]: And Gruchet, too. Ah, my friends, I am delighted as well as touched. [*Strikes attitude*] Indeed, my fellow-citizens—

GRUCHET: But we don't know what you are talking about.

MUREL: We have heard nothing, I assure you.

ROUSSELIN: Why, they have asked me—in fact, urged me—

ALL: They? Who?

ROUSSELIN [*with dignity*]: The ministerial committee, which has proposed me as a candidate for this district.

MUREL [*aside*]: Hang it! Some one has got ahead of me, after all!

MME. R.: Oh, how delightful!

GRUCHET: And shall you accept the nomination?

ROUSSELIN: Why not? I am a conservative, as everyone knows.

MME R.: Have you given your answer?

ROUSSELIN: Not yet, my dear. I wished to consult you.

MME. R.: I say, accept!

LOUISE: Oh, of course!

ROUSSELIN: You see no reason why I should not do so?

ALL: { Certainly not! / Quite the contrary! / Accept, by all means.

ROUSSELIN: Frankly, now,—you think it would be a wise action on my part?

MME. R.: Yes, yes!

ROUSSELIN: Very well, then. At least, I can always say that you urged me to take this step. [*About to go*]

MUREL [*detains him*]: Just a word of warning. Be a little prudent about this matter. Don't act too hastily.

ROUSSELIN [*astonished*]: Why, what do you mean?

MUREL: Well, you know, such a candidacy is not, after all, a very serious matter.

ROUSSELIN: And why not, pray?

SCENE V.

(*The same, including* M. Marchais, *followed by* M. Dodart)

MARCHAIS: I salute the company! Ladies, pray pardon my intrusion. I was instructed to come here to learn Monsieur Rousselin's intentions. It is necessary that he should give us a speedy reply, and we hope for a favourable one.

ROUSSELIN: Certainly.

MARCHAIS: Because we believe that you are a practical man, and would make a good deputy.

ROUSSELIN: A deputy! [*Delighted.*]

(*Enter* M. Dodart)

DODART: Well, Monsieur Rousselin, everyone outside is very impatient to know your decision.

GRUCHET [*aside, grumbling*]: That Dodart! A regular hypocrite!

DODART [*to* Onésime]: Monsieur, your noble father, who is at present in the court outside, requested me to tell you that he desires to speak to you.

MUREL [*to* Gruchet]: Ah! his papa has arrived, it appears.

GRUCHET [*to* Murel]: He arrived immediately after these men entered the grounds. He means to keep his eye on our friend Rousselin, you may be sure.

MUREL: Pardon my interruption, Monsieur Dodart. [*To* Rousselin] Invent some pretext to gain time before replying—only a little delay. [*To* Marchais] Say to Monsieur Rousselin's friends that he begs for a little delay, as he is not feeling quite well, but that as soon as he recovers he will give them his answer. Go and tell them that immediately. [*Exit* Marchais]

ROUSSELIN: I say, Murel, what the deuce did you do that for? Rather cool proceeding on your part, I should say!

MUREL: My dear friend, I assure you it is not the proper thing to accept a candidacy in that fashion—on the spur of the moment.

ROUSSELIN: But for the last three years I have thought of nothing else than the possibility of obtaining it!

MUREL: To speak frankly, I think that you are making a blunder in this affair. Ask Monsieur Dodart, a man of common-sense who has had plenty of experience and knows this district well, whether he thinks your chance of election is good—a sure thing, in short.

DODART: I will not say it is sure, of course. But I believe he stands a very good chance of being elected. No one can be sure of the result of an election, especially as we do not know whether our adversaries—

GRUCHET [*interrupts*]: And they are very numerous!

ROUSSELIN [*astonished*]: Numerous, did you say?

MUREL: Certainly they are. [*To* Dodart] You will have the kindness, then, to excuse our friend here, who wishes to have a little time for reflection. [*To* Rousselin] Ah, if you will risk everything, prepare for the consequences!

ROUSSELIN: Perhaps you are right. [*To* Dodart] Yes, Monsieur Dodart, pray ask them to allow me a brief delay in order that I may consider the matter.

DODART [*bows*]: Very well. Monsieur Onésime, shall we go?

MUREL: By all means. It will not do to keep his papa waiting!

ROUSSELIN [*to* Murel, *who has taken* Onésime *by the arm, about to go*]: What, are you going too? Why do you leave me?

MUREL: That is my secret! Now, don't worry! Wait and see!

[*Exit with* Onésime *and* Dodart.

SCENE VI.

(Rousselin, Mme. Rousselin, Louise, Miss Arabella, *and* Gruchet)

ROUSSELIN: What can he be going to do?

GRUCHET: I know nothing at all about it.

MME. R.: What an absurd fellow he is!

GRUCHET: You may be sure it is some boyish joke of his. [*Laughs*] Oh, Monsieur Rousselin, I came here to-day to ask permission to present to you a young man—a friend of mine—who desires the honour of your acquaintance.

ROUSSELIN: Very well, bring him along.

GRUCHET: But I do not wish to do anything that might be disagreeable to you. Sometimes, you know, you have your little—prejudices. In short, the young man I wish to introduce is Monsieur Julien Duprat.

ROUSSELIN: No, no! Not that man!

GRUCHET: Will you tell me why you forbid it?

ROUSSELIN: Don't speak to me of him, I say! [*Sees newspaper lying on the round table; picks it up*] I have said several times that this sheet should not be brought into my house. [*Examines the journal*] But it appears that I am not master here. Look! here are some of Duprat's verses!

GRUCHET: Very likely, I should think, since he is a poet.

ROUSSELIN: I don't like poets—they are all blackguards and rascals!

ARABELLA [*somewhat breathlessly*]: I assure you, Monsieur, that I once had a short conversation with Monsieur Duprat in the public park, and he is—very charming indeed!

GRUCHET [*to* Rousselin]: If you would only receive him!

ROUSSELIN: I am less inclined than ever to do so—[*to* Louise] less than ever, I tell you, Louise.

LOUISE: Oh, I am not defending him, papa.

ROUSSELIN: I should hope not—a fellow like that!

ARABELLA [*with strong emotion*]: Ah!

GRUCHET: But, my dear Rousselin, why are you so bitter against Monsieur Duprat?

ROUSSELIN: Because—pardon me, Miss Arabella! [*To* Mme. R.] Will you ladies oblige me by going into the house, my dear? I wish to explain something to Monsieur Gruchet.

[*Exit* Mme. R., Louise, *and* Miss Arabella]

SCENE VII.

GRUCHET: Well, I am ready to hear you. [*Sits on bench,* L.]

ROUSSELIN [*takes up journal*]: The poem I noticed in this sheet is entitled "Again to Her!" [*Reads*]

> "Under the bright Egyptian sky,
> The stony, crouching sphinxes sigh
> When torments harsh their breasts assail,
> Because of"—

I have a pretty shrewd idea in my head as to this sphinx business, my friend!

GRUCHET: And I, too, although I don't quite understand all the allusions.

ROUSSELIN [*taps the journal in his hand*]: This is the continuation of a clandestine correspondence, that's what it is!

GRUCHET: Explain yourself more clearly, I beg.

ROUSSELIN: Well, I will tell you, in confidence, that a week ago last Tuesday, while I was walking in my garden very early in the morning—I am so much upset nowadays that I don't sleep well

—I perceived, between the trellis and the fruit-wall—

GRUCHET: A man?

ROUSSELIN: No, a letter. The envelope was rather large, and looked as if it might enclose some sort of petition, but it was addressed simply "To Her!" Of course I opened it, as you may imagine, and found inside a declaration of love in verse. And such stanzas, my friend! I assure you, they were passionate and inflammatory to a degree!

GRUCHET: I suppose the lines were not signed, of course. Was there any clue to the identity of the sender?

ROUSSELIN: Listen! I said to myself that the first thing to do was to discover who was the lady that had inspired these glowing lines; and as they speak of dark hair, my suspicion fell at first upon Miss Arabella, our governess.

GRUCHET: But she is a blonde!

ROUSSELIN: What does that matter? Poets often use one word instead of another, for the sake of the rhyme. However, purely as a matter of delicacy —you know what English women are—I have not ventured to ask her any questions.

GRUCHET: But what did your wife say?

ROUSSELIN: She only gave a shrug, and advised me not to bother my head about it.

GRUCHET: But why do you suspect Julien of being the author of the stanzas?

ROUSSELIN: I will explain. First, I must tell you that the poem I found in the garden began with these words.

"When I behold thy robe among the orange-trees."

Now, I possess two orangeries, one on each side of the house, and there are no others in this neighbourhood. What does this show? That the declaration was addressed to some member of my household. To whom? Evidently to my daughter, Louise. And by whom? By the only person in this part of the country that writes verses—Julien Duprat! (Gruchet *makes a movement of dissent*] Moreover, when I compared the handwriting of the verses found by the wall with that which I see every day on the wrappers of the journal, I saw at once that they were exactly similar.

GRUCHET [*aside*]: Clumsy Julien!

ROUSSELIN: So that is your protégé, Gruchet. What does he propose to do in this house—seduce Mademoiselle Rousselin?

GRUCHET: Oh, what an idea!

ROUSSELIN: To marry her, perhaps.

GRUCHET: Well, he might wish to do that.

ROUSSELIN [*drily*]: I think it very likely! Upon my soul! these fellows have no respect for anyone. What insolence! Do I ask anything of him? Do I mix myself up in his affairs? Let him write his newspaper articles! Let him try to stir up the people against me! Let him then make apologies to mud-slingers like himself! If I should see him this moment, I would say: Get away from here, you miserable little hanger-on of newspaper offices, and hunt elsewhere for an heiress!

GRUCHET: Humph! as to that, my friend, there are others besides journalists who seek your daughter for the sake of her money.

ROUSSELIN: What are you saying?

GRUCHET: Why, the thing is plain enough to be seen! A certain person, we will say, lives in the country, where he cultivates, with his own hands, the soil owned by his ancestors. He does it very badly, to be sure, but is forced to it by reasons of economy. The land is now poor, besides being heavily mortgaged. This person has eight children, five of whom are girls, one of them a humpback. One never sees the other daughters on week-days, because of deficiences in their toilets. The eldest of the sons speculated in stocks for a time, but is now making a beast of himself with absinthe, and his need of money is frequent. The second son, fortunately, is to be a priest. The youngest son —you know him, he is very much in evidence just now. Existence cannot be very gay in the ancestral castle, where the rain falls on the head through the holes in the roof. But our gentleman lays his plans, and one fine day he packs them all into the rickety old family carriage, which he drives himself, and they come to refresh themselves at the excellent table of that good Monsieur Rousselin, who is only too happy to be thus honoured!

ROUSSELIN: See here, my friend, you carry your obstinate resentment against that family rather too far.

GRUCHET: Well, I don't understand why you should have so much respect for the Bouvignys, unless it is a survival of the deference your class was once compelled to pay to the aristocrats who were in former days your masters.

ROUSSELIN [*pained*]: Gruchet, not a word of that, my friend, not a word! That thought is—

GRUCHET: Oh, don't be afraid! They will never say anything about it, and for good reasons.

ROUSSELIN: What reasons?

GRUCHET: Don't you see that these aristocrats despise us because we are plebeians — parvenus? That they are jealous of you because you are rich? The proffer of the candidacy to you — due, I have no doubt, to the management of Bouvigny, and of which he will probably boast — is merely a bait to catch your daughter's fortune. But, although it is quite possible that you will not be elected —

ROUSSELIN: Not be elected?

GRUCHET: Certainly — I said it was quite possible. Nevertheless, your daughter will probably become the wife of a young idiot who will blush to acknowledge his father-in-law.

ROUSSELIN: Oh, but I believe they have some sentiment in the matter.

GRUCHET: You think so, do you? But suppose I tell you that already they speak as if they owned you!

ROUSSELIN: Who told you that?

GRUCHET: Félicité, my maid. You know how servants talk over, among themselves, all the affairs of their masters.

ROUSSELIN: But what have they said? Tell me that.

GRUCHET: Their cook heard them talking mysteriously of this possible marriage of their son to Mademoiselle Louise, and when the Countess expressed some doubt about being able to bring it to pass, the Count, alluding to you, said, "Bah! he will feel himself only too much honoured!"

ROUSSELIN: Ah, they think they honour me, eh?

GRUCHET: They believe the affair is as good as settled.

ROUSSELIN: It is not, however,—thank heaven!

GRUCHET: They are so confident that just now, before the ladies, Onésime took on a little air of proprietorship.

ROUSSELIN: Did he, indeed?

GRUCHET: A little more, and I think he would have said "thee" and "thou" to them!

PIERRE [*announcing*]: Monsieur the Count de Bouvigny! [*Exit.*

GRUCHET: The Count! I will go. Good-bye, Rousselin. Don't forget what I have said to you. [*Enter* Bouvigny. Gruchet *passes in front of him, keeping his hat on his head; the two exchange disdainful glances. At the door* Gruchet *turns and shakes his fist at* Bouvigny's *back*] I think I've settled your business, my fine gentleman! [*Exit.*

SCENE VIII.

(Rousselin, *the* Count de Bouvigny)

BOUVIGNY [*In a tone of easy familiarity*]: I asked for a private interview, my dear fellow, with the intention of—

ROUSSELIN [*interrupts with ceremonious dignity, inviting the Count, with a gesture, to be seated*]: Monsieur de Bouvigny!

BOUVIGNY [*sits*]: Oh, ceremony is not necessary between us, is it? I wish to say, in a few words —flattering myself in advance that you will grant the request I am about to make—that I have the

honour to ask the hand in marriage of your daughter, Mademoiselle Louise, for my son, the Vicomte Onésime-Gaspard-Oliver de Bouvigny. [*A pause*] Well, your answer, Monsieur?

ROUSSELIN: I can say nothing just at present.

BOUVIGNY: Ah, I forgot! Mademoiselle has great expectations, of course, and—as a *dot*—a settlement—well, in short, Monsieur Dodart, who holds the titles to certain mortgages [*lowers his voice*], will not fail to do the right thing. [*A pause*] I await your answer, Monsieur.

ROUSSELIN: Monsieur de Bouvigny, your proposition does me very great honour, but—

BOUVIGNY [*annoyed*]: Eh, Monsieur? But what?

ROUSSELIN: I fear that some one must have greatly exaggerated to you the amount of my fortune.

BOUVIGNY: And do you think we consider a thing like that? Do you imagine that the house of Bouvigny—

ROUSSELIN [*drily*]: Far be it from me to impute to you any mercenary motives! Nevertheless, it is only right to tell you that I am not so rich as many persons believe.

BOUVIGNY [*graciously*]: The disproportion in other respects would only be less marked!

ROUSSELIN: However, in spite of the modest amount of my revenues, we manage to live with a certain degree of comfort. My wife has rather expensive tastes, and I am fond of entertaining, and of making happy everyone around me. I repaved, at my own expense, the road from Bugueux to Faverville. I have established a school, and have endowed at the hospital four beds which bear my name.

BOUVIGNY: These facts are very well known, my dear sir.

ROUSSELIN: I have rehearsed them only to convince you that, although the son of a banker, and once in that business myself, I am comfortably well off, but not what is generally considered a man of great wealth. As to Monsieur Onésime, his rank would not in itself be an obstacle, but there is a serious drawback, nevertheless. Your son has no occupation.

BOUVIGNY [*proudly*]: Sir, a gentleman of my son's rank can take up no profession but that of arms!

ROUSSELIN: But he is not a soldier.

BOUVIGNY: He is waiting, in order to serve his country, until the government is changed.

ROUSSELIN: And while waiting?

BOUVIGNY: He will live in his own domains, as I live, Monsieur.

ROUSSELIN: To wear out his shoes in hunting — very good! But, Monsieur, I prefer to give my daughter to some one whose fortune — pardon me for using the word! — is even less than your son's.

BOUVIGNY: But your daughter's fortune is assured, is it not?

ROUSSELIN: Yes! But I prefer to give her to a man who has nothing at all.

BOUVIGNY: Nothing at all!

ROUSSELIN [*rises*]: Yes, Monsieur, a simple workman, a person without breeding or culture!

BOUVIGNY [*rises*]: Is it your intention to express scorn of rank and aristocratic breeding?

ROUSSELIN: Yes, Monsieur. I am a son of the Revolution!

BOUVIGNY: Your manners show it, believe me!

ROUSSELIN: And I do not allow myself to be dazzled by the glitter of brilliant titles.

BOUVIGNY: Nor I by that of gold!

ROUSSELIN: We no longer cringe low before the nobility, thank heaven!

BOUVIGNY: True! I remember that your grandfather was a servant in our household!

ROUSSELIN: Ah, you wish to insult me! Go, Monsieur! The consideration of one's reputation is to-day a privilege belonging to everyone. Mine is above your sneers and calumnies. Has not a group of worthy citizens just waited upon me in order to offer me the candidacy?

BOUVIGNY: Let me tell you that they wished to offer it first to me, and I declined it in your favour! But in the face of such indelicacy on your part, after the declaration of your principles, and since you have practically announced yourself a democrat, a supporter of anarchy—

ROUSSELIN: Of anarchy! Not at all!

BOUVIGNY: An organ of disorder, I say—I have resolved to take back my refusal. I shall declare myself a candidate—a conservative candidate, you understand—and we shall see which will win! I am the friend of the prefect who has just been nominated. I shall tell him everything, and he will support me. Good evening, Monsieur!

[*Exit.*

SCENE IX.

ROUSSELIN: Now he is so furious now that he is quite capable of doing all he can to ruin me in public

opinion — even of representing me as a Jacobite! Perhaps I did wrong to hurt his feelings. But to be expected to hand over a large part of my fortune to set up the Bouvignys — that was a little too much! Well, it can't be helped now, but it is a pity to break with him. Murel and Gruchet already appear to me to be less certain of my election than they were, and we must find some means to persuade the Conservatives that I am in reality the most conservative of men! Ha! what does this mean?

Scene X.

(*Enter* Murel, *followed by a crowd of Electors, then by* Heurtelot, Beaumesnil, Voinchet, Hombourg, Ledru, *then* Gruchet)

Murel: My dear fellow-citizen, the electors here present have come to offer you, through me, the candidacy of the Liberal party of this district.

Rousselin: But, gentlemen —

Murel: You will have the majority of votes in the communes of Faverville, Harolle, Lahoussaye, Sannevas, Bonneval, Hautot, Saint-Mathieu —

Rousselin [*delighted*]: Ah, indeed!

Murel: Randau, Manerville, and La Coudrette. In short, we count on a majority of more than fifteen hundred votes, and your election is practically assured.

Rousselin: Ah, my fellow-citizens — [*Aside to* Murel] I don't know what to say!

MUREL: Allow me to present to you some of your political friends. Here is the most enthusiastic of all, a true patriot — Monsieur Heurtelot, a manufacturer —

HEURTELOT: Oh, say shoemaker — it is all the same to me!

MUREL: Monsieur Hombourg, proprietor of the Golden Lion, and also of a livery stable. Monsieur Voinchet, nurseryman; Monsieur Beaumesnil, without a profession; and the brave Captain Ledru, retired.

ROUSSELIN [*with enthusiasm*]: Ah, the military!

MUREL: And we are all convinced that you will fill this high office in the most satisfactory manner. [*Aside to* Rousselin] Say something.

ROUSSELIN: Gentlemen — no, citizens! My principles are yours — and — certainly — I am a son of this soil — like yourselves. No one has ever heard me say anything against the cause of liberty. Quite the contrary! You will find in me a servant devoted to your interests — a defender — a barrier against the encroachments of Power!

MUREL [*presses* Rousselin's *hand*]: Good! my friend, very good! Have no doubt as to the result of your nomination! First of all, you will be sustained and upheld by that well-known journal, *The Impartial.*

ROUSSELIN: *The Impartial* will support me, you say?

GRUCHET [*coming forward from the midst of the group*]: Absolutely, I assure you. I have just come from the editor's office. Julien Duprat is most enthusiastic. [*Surprised at seeing* Murel; *then aside to him*] He has given me his reasons — I will explain to you later. [*To the Elect-*

ors] You will permit me, gentlemen. [*Makes his way to* Rousselin; *then aside to him*] Now, then, my friend, don't you think you would do well to follow my advice?

ROUSSELIN: To follow *your* advice? Pardon me! I have a head of my own, you know.

GRUCHET: I mean — to let me present Julien to you? He is very desirous to meet you.

ROUSSELIN: Is it — absolutely necessary?

GRUCHET: Oh, indispensable!

ROUSSELIN: Well, then — yes, — as you please.

[*Exit* Gruchet.

HEURTELOT [*takes* Rousselin *by the elbow and turns him squarely around*]: That is not all, by any means, Monsieur. One of the first things you must do after you are elected is to abolish the tax on liquors.

ROUSSELIN: Abolish the tax on liquors — oh, yes, certainly!

HEURTELOT: The other candidates have made fine promises, but after election they tell you to go and take a walk! But I believe you are an honest man — give me your hand on it! [*Extends his own hand*]

ROUSSELIN [*with a slight hesitation*]: Willingly, sir, willingly!

HEURTELOT: That's all right, then. It is high time that some of these public abuses should stop. We have suffered from them quite long enough.

HOMBOURG: I believe you! A man can make nothing now in the livery business. The price of hay is beyond all reason.

ROUSSELIN: That is quite true. The occupation of agriculture —

HOMBOURG: I am not talking about agriculture, but about the livery business.

MUREL: And a most important business it is! But now, thanks to our friend here, the government will—

LEDRU: Bah! the government! It decorates a lot of good-for-nothing puppies!

VOINCHET: I wish to say that the laying out of the railway so that it shall run through Saint-Mathieu, is a piece of imbecile folly.

BEAUMESNIL: A man cannot educate his children properly in these days.

ROUSSELIN: I promise you all—

HOMBOURG: First of all, the rights of liverymen.

ROUSSELIN: Yes, yes!

LEDRU: That is, when they are in the interest of discipline.

ROUSSELIN: Of course!

VOINCHET: You must persuade the railway company to lay the road by way of Bonneval.

ROUSSELIN: Certainly, certainly!

BEAUMESNIL: As for me, I have only the best intentions—

ROUSSELIN: I believe you, Monsieur.

HOMBOURG: Thus, in order to rent a carriage—

LEDRU: I ask nothing for myself, but—

VOINCHET: My property will be greatly injured if—

BEAUMESNIL: Really, you know, since there are colleges—

MUREL [*loudly*]: My fellow-citizens, pardon me! One word! Gentlemen, on this occasion, when our beloved fellow-citizen here has so well expressed himself,—in language which I might almost call classic in its simplicity—and has so well con-

firmed our hopes, I am very happy to have been your spokesman. In order to celebrate this event —the influence of which will spread over all the district, and perhaps over France—permit me to invite you to partake, next Monday, of a punch of my own brewing!

ELECTORS [*together*]: Bravo! Agreed! Next Monday be it!

MUREL: And now, I believe, nothing remains for us to do but to retire.

ELECTORS [*together*]: Good morning, Monsieur Rousselin! Good luck! All will go well! You will see!

ROUSSELIN [*shakes hands with several of the Electors*]: My friends, I am indeed touched! Good morning! I am your servant, gentlemen! [*Electors retire slowly up stage, talking together*]

MUREL [*aside to* Rousselin]: You must cultivate Heurtelot a little; he is a leader among them. [*Follows Electors up stage and delays their exit*]

ROUSSELIN [*calls*]: Oh, Monsieur Heurtelot, one moment!

HEURTELOT [*returns*]: Yes, Monsieur.

ROUSSELIN [*speaks confidentially*]: Could you not make me fifteen pairs of boots?

HEURTELOT: Fifteen pairs, Monsieur!

ROUSSELIN: Yes, and as many pairs of shoes. I am not going on a long journey, but I think it wise to provide myself with a good supply of foot-wear.

HEURTELOT: They shall be begun at once, Monsieur. At your service! [*Bows low, and rejoins the Electors*]

HOMBOURG [*approaches* Rousselin, *speaking confidentially*]: Monsieur Rousselin, I have recently

bought a pair of beautiful chestnut horses, and they would look superb harnessed to your carriage. Would you like to see them?

ROUSSELIN: Yes, yes! One of these days. [Hombourg *rejoins Electors*]

VOINCHET [*approaches* Rousselin]: I will send you a little memorandum about the laying out of that new railroad, showing that by running it through my property —

ROUSSELIN: Very well, very well! [Voinchet *rejoins Electors*]

BEAUMESNIL: I mean to bring my son to call on you, and you will be convinced that it would be deplorable to allow so promising a boy to grow up without a proper education.

ROUSSELIN: He shall be permitted to re-enter his classes, I promise it.

HEURTELOT: That's something like a candidate! Hurrah for Rousselin!

ALL: Hurrah for Rousselin! [*Exit Electors.*

SCENE XI.

(Rousselin, Murel)

ROUSSELIN [*rushes to* Murel *and embraces him*]: Ah, my friend, my dear, good friend!

MUREL: Well, do you think I managed that part of the business satisfactorily?

ROUSSELIN: I never can find words to express my gratitude and appreciation.

MUREL: You are very desirous to obtain this nomination, aren't you?

ROUSSELIN: Well, I don't mind telling you that I am very anxious to get it. You see, after I retired from active business life, and had spent about a year or two out here in the country, I began to feel a certain lassitude creeping over me. I became dull and heavy. I used to go to sleep every evening after dinner; and finally the doctor told my wife it was absolutely necessary for me to find something to occupy myself with. So I cast about in my mind to decide upon some agreeable occupation.

MUREL: And you thought you would like to become a deputy, eh?

ROUSSELIN: Naturally. Besides, I have arrived at an age when a man owes something to himself. I have bought a library and I have subscribed to *The Monitor*.

MUREL: You have laid out some pretty stiff work for yourself, I should say!

ROUSSELIN: Then I joined the Archælogical Society, and I have already received, through the mails, several pamphlets on archæology. After awhile I was chosen as a member of the municipal council; next, of the district council; and finally, of the general council; and when any important questions came up in the affairs of these councils, I never compromised myself by making any statements or remarks—I only smiled discreetly! Ah, the non-committal smile is a great resource sometimes, my boy!

MUREL: But in doing that, you see, you never allow the public to become acquainted with your real ideas and sympathies; and now it is time to declare yourself. Perhaps you do not know—

ROUSSELIN: Oh, yes! I know that I owe everything to you alone.

MUREL: No, no! You don't understand at all.

ROUSSELIN: Perhaps not! That's your modesty. What a diplomat you are, my dear fellow!

MUREL [*aside*]: He's trying to pique me! [*Aloud*] Frankly, the workmen in my factory were against you when your name was first proposed, and they are redoubtable men, I assure you. But now they are all in your favour.

ROUSSELIN: You are worth your weight in gold!

MUREL [*aside*]: I don't ask quite so much as that!

ROUSSELIN [*looks at* Murel *admiringly*]: You are dearer to me than a brother! You are like my own son!

MUREL [*significantly*]: Well, I might be—that!

ROUSSELIN: No doubt [*sudden movement from* Murel], if I were only a trifle older.

MUREL [*with a forced laugh*]: Or if—I—should become your—son-in-law! How would you like that?

ROUSSELIN [*also with a forced laugh*]: You're a great joker! You know you wouldn't like it yourself.

MUREL [*earnestly*]: But indeed I should!

ROUSSELIN: Nonsense! Marry, with your Parisian habits?

MUREL: I should live in the country.

ROUSSELIN: Oh, pshaw! Men of your age don't marry.

MUREL: Thirty-four years—it is just the right age.

ROUSSELIN: Especially when they have before them such a future as yours.

MUREL: My future prospects would be greatly improved if—

ROUSSELIN: Now let us reason a little. Here you are,

simply the manager of the Bugneaux spinning-mills, representing the Flemish company, and you have a salary of twenty thousand francs.

MUREL: And a considerable sum coming to me besides, in perquisites and privileges.

ROUSSELIN: But how about the years when business is bad? And then, of course, you might lose your place at any time.

MUREL: Then I should go somewhere else, where I could find—

ROUSSELIN: But you have debts and dishonoured bills —you are harassed by your creditors.

MUREL: I have some means of my own, nevertheless, to say nothing of my expectations.

ROUSSELIN: Ah, you mean you expect to inherit something from your aunt. You do not really count upon that, do you? Your aunt lives two hundred leagues away from this place, and besides you are not on good terms with her.

MUREL [*aside*]: The old brute! He finds out everything!

ROUSSELIN: In short, my dear Murel, although I doubt neither your intelligence nor your industry, I prefer to give my daughter to a man who—

MUREL: Who has nothing at all, and is a fool into the bargain, I suppose!

ROUSSELIN: No, but whose fortune, though small, would be certain.

MUREL [*scornfully*]: Ah, indeed!

ROUSSELIN: Yes, Monsieur, to a gentleman possessing a modest income, or to a small landed proprietor living in this part of the country.

MUREL: Apparently, you have not a very high opinion of a man that works.

ROUSSELIN: Listen to me, my good fellow! Industry is very commendable, but it is not to be depended upon—its results are not sure—and a good father must look carefully after the interests of his child.

MUREL: Then you refuse to give me your daughter?

ROUSSELIN [*very good-naturedly, taking* Murel's *hand*]: I am forced to do so, but really it is not my fault, and I speak entirely without rancour. [*Calls*] Pierre! Bring my writing-case and an inkstand. [*To* Murel] Sit down here. You must now prepare my declaration of policy for the electors.

(*Enter* Pierre, *with writing materials; puts them on small table,* R. *Exit*)

MUREL: I must prepare it, you say?

ROUSSELIN: Yes, and afterward we will look it over together. But you begin it, there's a good fellow! With your spirit and imagination, you will be sure to do it well,—better than I could, although you did praise me for my speech to the electors. It *was* good, wasn't it? Now I will leave you for a short time, as I have to look after some rather pressing matters. Give them something lively—something fiery—wake them up! [*Exit.*

SCENE XII.

MUREL: Fool! I've advanced my interests beautifully, I must say! [*Looks after* Rousselin] You old idiot! You'll never find anyone that will be so

useful to you as I. How shall I pay him back, or rather, how can I frighten him? He would sacrifice anything for the sake of being elected. I shall have to threaten him with a dangerous political rival. But whom? [*Enter* Gruchet] Ah, Gruchet!

GRUCHET: You look disturbed. What is the matter with you?

MUREL: Remorse! I have just done a stupid thing—and you, too.

GRUCHET: In what way?

MUREL: You were here just now, with the men that promised to support Rousselin's candidacy. You saw and heard him.

GRUCHET: Yes, and then I went to find Julien—he is coming here directly.

MUREL: It is not a question of Julien, but of Rousselin. That man is an ass! He doesn't know how to say four words properly. We shall have a fine deputy!

GRUCHET: Well, I did not take the initiative step!

MUREL: He has shown himself to be possessed of scarcely mediocre intelligence.

GRUCHET: Quite true!

MUREL: But that doesn't prevent him from being regarded with great consideration in this neighbourhood,—even more than you yourself receive.

GRUCHET [*vexed*]: More than I!

MUREL: I don't wish to offend you, but of course I know you do not enjoy, in this town, the distinction that belongs to the Rousselins.

GRUCHET: Oh, if I wished it— [*Short pause*]

MUREL [*looks* Gruchet *full in the eyes*]: Gruchet, would you be willing to raise yourself in the world,

even if it should put you to a rather heavy expense?

GRUCHET: Heavy expense? That sort of thing is not very much to my taste, but what do you mean?

MUREL: Suppose some one said to you: For a consideration of several thousand francs, you may take Rousselin's place — you shall become deputy?

GRUCHET: I? Deputy?

MUREL: Just think what a glorious time you would have in Paris, where you would be in the very midst of great affairs! You would meet hundreds of delightful people — even the ministers. You would know all about everything — society gossip, news about important public works, the latest thing on the Bourse — everything! What influence you might have, my friend, and what an experience!

GRUCHET: But how can all this possibly come about? Rousselin is almost elected.

MUREL: Not yet! He failed to mention his ideas on the rights of franchise when he made the declaration of his policy; and then — a little — manipulation — is easy! Several electors were not in favour of his nomination in the first place. Heurtelot, in particular grumbled at it.

GRUCHET: The shoemaker? I have a seizure against him for the day after to-morrow.

MUREL: Put it off! He is looked up to by his fellows. With regard to the others, we shall see. I shall arrange matters so that the dissatisfaction with Rousselin shall begin among the workmen in our mills; then, if it becomes necessary for me to declare myself outright for you, I shall do so.

As Monsieur Rousselin has not shown a sufficiently patriotic spirit, I feel compelled to withdraw from his support! More than that, I know him now for what he is — a blockhead!

GRUCHET: Gently! gently! [*Falls into a reverie*]

MUREL: Who can stop you? You are on the "left" side, aren't you? Your name can be brought up by that faction, as a member of the Chamber; but even if you fail of election, the votes cast for you will take away from Rousselin any chance he might have of being elected.

GRUCHET: That would make him furious!

MUREL: It will not cost much to try it — perhaps a few hundred francs in the wine-shops.

GRUCHET [*with interest*]: No more than that, you think?

MUREL: Now I am going to stir up the district! Soon you will be nominated, and Rousselin will be buried — out of sight! You will have the satisfaction of seeing that some persons that appear not to know you now, will then bow very low and say, "Monsieur the deputy, I have the honour to offer you my respects!"

SCENE XIII.

(*The same. Enter* Julien Duprat; *looks about him right and left*)

MUREL: My young friend Duprat, you cannot see Monsieur Rousselin.

JULIEN: I cannot see him, you say?

MUREL: Precisely. He and I have had some disagreement over politics.

JULIEN: But I do not understand. Just now you came to my house to tell me that I must support Monsieur Rousselin, and gave me a mass of reasons—which I repeated to Monsieur Gruchet. He accepted them immediately, all the sooner since he desires—

GRUCHET [*hastily*]: That matter is entirely between you and me, Julien. This is another affair altogether—something that does not concern Rousselin.

JULIEN: Then what is the trouble regarding him?

MUREL: I will tell you in a few words—he is not the right man for our party.

GRUCHET [*complacently*]: Another candidate must be found!

MUREL: You shall know soon the name of the next candidate. But let us get out of here. We mustn't conspire on the very grounds of the enemy.

JULIEN: The enemy! Rousselin?

MUREL: Certainly! And you will please oblige us by attacking him vigorously in *The Impartial*.

JULIEN: But why? I don't know of anything bad to say about him.

GRUCHET: With a little exercise of the imagination, it should be easy to find something.

JULIEN: I am not in the habit of doing that sort of thing, Monsieur!

GRUCHET: Now listen! You came to me first to offer me your services, and, knowing that I was a friend of Rousselin, you begged me—yes, that's the word—to introduce you here.

JULIEN: And no sooner do I arrive than you take back your promise to present me.

GRUCHET: It is not my fault if political affairs have taken a turn in the other direction.

JULIEN: And is it mine?

GRUCHET: You will remember, it was distinctly understood between us that you should publish some slashing articles against the Society of the Turf of Grumesnil-les-Arbois — the president of which is the Count de Bouvigny — demonstrating the financial incapacity of its leader. A fine affair, that Society! from which that scoundrelly Dodart has excluded me!

MUREL [*aside*]: Oh! So this is the secret of the alliance between Gruchet and our young friend!

GRUCHET: Up to the present, however, you have done nothing whatever, which is a very good reason why you should now do something effective. Besides, what we wish you to do is not at all difficult.

JULIEN: I don't care what it is! I refuse!

MUREL: Julien, you appear to forget the terms of your engagement with our journal.

JULIEN: Oh, I remember them well enough! You engaged me to make extracts from other publications; to write bright little stories about lost dogs, floods, fires, and accidents, and to write up, with plenty of clever hits, the daily happenings of life in Paris! I must seek interviews, listen to explanations, receive all visitors, work like a galley-slave, lead a regular dog's life, and never, under any conditions, be my own master in anything! Well, for once I ask to be excused.

MUREL: All the worse for you!

GRUCHET: I conclude that it was not necessary for you to accept this engagement with *The Impartial!*

JULIEN: Not necessary! Ah! if only I could have found another!

GRUCHET: Oh, indeed! Well, when a man has no means to fall back upon, I should think it would be rather pleasant to have a good comfortable berth like this.

JULIEN [*walks slowly up stage*]: Ah, the misery of poverty!

MUREL: Let him pout! We might as well sit down here a few moments, long enough for me to write out your declaration of policy.

GRUCHET: Willingly! [*They sit;* Murel *draws out paper and pencil and begins to write;* Gruchet *looks over his shoulder*]

JULIEN [*stands up stage; looks up at* Rousselin's *house*]: How gladly would I rid myself of my wretched existence, were it not for thee, my love! Oh, I cannot allow the slightest grief or anxiety on my account to come to thee — here in thine own home! May the walls that shelter thee be blessed! [*Looks off*] It appears to me that I can distinguish a white robe out there — among the acacias. Now it has disappeared! Farewell! [*About to go*]

GRUCHET [*looks around at* Julien]: Wait a moment, we have something to show you.

JULIEN: Ah! I have had enough of your dirty work! [*Exit.*

MUREL [*holds up sheet of paper*]: There! What do you think of it?

GRUCHET: It is very well done! Thank you! But—

MUREL: Well, what is it?

GRUCHET: The thought of Rousselin disturbs me a little.

MUREL: Pooh! He is a person of very little consequence.

GRUCHET: You don't know what he is capable of doing. Young Duprat appeared extremely angry just now, didn't he?

MUREL: My opinion is, he must have some strong reason for wishing to become acquainted with the Rousselins.

GRUCHET: To be sure he has! He is in love with Louise.

MUREL: Who told you so?

GRUCHET: Rousselin himself.

MUREL [*aside*]: Another rival! Bah! I have knocked over more formidable ones than he! [*Aloud*] I am going to find Julien again, and catechise him. In the meantime, you must get this declaration of policy set up at the printer's; then go around and see as many of your friends as you can, and meet me here again in two hours.

GRUCHET: Agreed! [*Exit.*

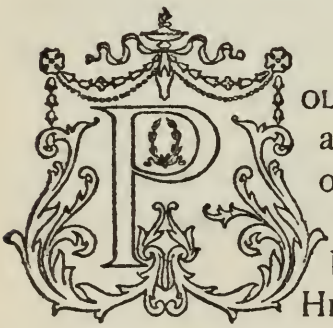
MUREL: And now, Monsieur Rousselin, I think the time will come when you will be glad to offer me your daughter!

ACT II.

Scene: *A promenade in a public square. A café,* L. 2 E.; *the walls and the iron gates leading to the grounds belonging to* Rousselin's *house,* R. 2 E. *As the curtain rises, a bill-poster is discovered affixing a placard to* Rousselin's *wall.*

SCENE I.

(Heurtelot, Marchais, *a* Village Policeman, *and a crowd of citizens*)



OLICEMAN: Move on, there! Get away from the wall, so that everyone can read the proclamation.

CITIZENS: That's right! Stand back! [*Crowd moves back*]

HEURTELOT: Ah, it is De Bouvigny's declaration of policy!

MARCHAIS: What! Is *he* nominated?

HEURTELOT: No, no! It is Gruchet who will get the nomination now. Read what is on the placard.

MARCHAIS: I—read it?

HEURTELOT: Yes.

MARCHAIS: You read the first part of it. [*Aside*] He does not know his alphabet! [*Aloud*] Well?

HEURTELOT: But why don't you read it?

MARCHAIS: I?

HEURTELOT [*aside*]: He doesn't know how to spell! [*Aloud*] Well—ahem!

POLICEMAN: And these ignoramuses vote! Wait—I'll read it for you. First, I'll read Bouvigny's: "My friends! Yielding to your urgent request, I believe it my duty to present myself as a candidate for your votes—"

HEURTELOT [*interrupts*]: Oh, we know all about him! Read another—read Gruchet's.

POLICEMAN: "Fellow-citizens! In obedience to the wishes of my friends, I present myself—"

MARCHAIS [*interrupts*]: What a farce! That's enough about him!

POLICEMAN: Now I will read Monsieur Rousselin's announcement: "My dear fellow-patriots! So many of you have solicited me to accept the nomination that I dare not—"

HEURTELOT: The old rascal! He thinks he is going to fool us! Let's tear down his placard!

MARCHAIS: Yes, because he is a traitor!

POLICEMAN [*stops their approach to the wall*]: You have no right to do that.

MARCHAIS: Not when it is in the interest of law and order?

HEURTELOT: And liberty!

POLICEMAN: You let those placards alone, or I will throw you both into jail!

HEURTELOT: A fine government this is! It is carried on only to torment us and cheat us!

MARCHAIS: We can do nothing to defend ourselves!

Scene II.

(*The same, including* Murel *and* Gruchet.)

Murel [*to* Heurtelot]: Faithful at your post! That's good! Now take all this crowd over there [*points to café*], and give them a drink.

Heurtelot: Oh, but—

Murel: Take them along, I say, and go in without ceremony. I have given them their orders over there, but it is Gruchet who stands treat!

Gruchet: Up to a certain amount—don't forget that!

Murel: Well, go along with them, then.

Citizens: Hurrah for Gruchet! A good fellow! A solid citizen! A patriot!

[*Exit all except* Murel.

Scene III.

Murel [*approaches* Rousselin's *gates*]: I must try to see Louise for a moment.

Arabella [*enters through the gates*]: I wish to speak to you, Monsieur.

Murel: Delighted, Miss Arabella! But—tell me—Louise, is she not—

Arabella: Was not some one here with you a moment ago?

Murel: Yes.

Arabella: Monsieur Duprat, I believe.

Murel: No, it was Gruchet.

ARABELLA: Gruchet! He is a very bad man! It is a shame to make him a candidate!

MUREL: And why, may I ask?

ARABELLA: Some time ago Monsieur Rousselin lent him quite a large sum of money, which he has never repaid. I have seen the memorandum of it.

MUREL [*aside*]: This explains the reason why Gruchet was so afraid of him!

ARABELLA: But Monsieur Rousselin had too much delicacy and kindly feeling to press him for payment. He is so good, although a little odd at times! For instance, his prejudice against Monsieur Julien—

MUREL: And Louise, Miss Arabella—how is she?

ARABELLA: Oh, when they told her it was impossible that she should be allowed to marry you, she wept sadly.

MUREL: My sweet Louise!

ARABELLA: Poor little thing! Madame Rousselin is very hard upon her.

MUREL: And her father—what does he say about me?

ARABELLA: He is very much worried and vexed.

MUREL: Does he regret his words to me?

ARABELLA: No. But he is afraid of you.

MUREL: I am glad to hear it!

ARABELLA: He fears your workmen will oppose him, and he dreads the editorials in *The Impartial*, of which he says you are the real master.

MUREL: Ha! ha! ha!

ARABELLA: But that is not true, is it? Has not Monsieur Julien more influence there than you?

MUREL [*still laughing*]: Go on, I beg, Miss Arabella!

ARABELLA: Oh! I am very sad about this whole affair. I wish that matters could be settled amicably.

MUREL: It would be rather difficult to do that now, it seems to me.

ARABELLA: Not at all! I know that Monsieur Rousselin strongly desires a friendly understanding. But hush! Do not mention what I have just said, I entreat you.

MUREL [*aside*]: What a queer creature!

ARABELLA: A reconciliation would be to your interest with regard to Louise, believe me! Everyone should be reconciled and made happy—she, you, myself, and Monsieur Julien.

MUREL [*aside*]: Always Julien! How stupid I have been! I believe I have discovered a romance—the poet and his muse! How very funny! [*Aloud*] I will do whatever I can to bring about a reconciliation. Au revoir, Mademoiselle.

ARABELLA [*curtseys*]: Good afternoon, sir! [*Sees an old woman, who stands up stage,* C., *beckoning*] Ah, Félicité! [*Joins the woman; they go out.*]

SCENE IV.

(*Enter* Rousselin, *hastily, through the gates*)

ROUSSELIN: Upon my word, this is a most unheard-of thing!

MUREL [*aside*]: Now for it!

ROUSSELIN: Gruchet!—it is that man Gruchet who is trying to cut the ground from under my feet! A

miserable fellow, whom I have protected and helped! And he boasts that he is upheld by you!

MUREL: But —

ROUSSELIN: How the devil did this idea of putting himself forward as a candidate ever get into his head?

MUREL: I really do not know. He came tearing into my rooms like a madman, saying that I must abjure all my former political opinions at once.

ROUSSELIN: I have been too moderate. Nevertheless, I protested with equal vigour against the preposterous demagogy, of which this rascally Gruchet is the representative, and the yoke of absolutism that the aristocrats would like to hang upon our necks, of which the Count de Bouvigny is the abominable supporter, the Gothic symbol, I may say! In a word, faithful to the traditions of the old French spirit, I demand, before all, the reign of law, the government of the people by the people, with a due regard for the rights of property. On that point —

MUREL: Precisely! It is on that very point that the people judge you as not being sufficiently republican in your ideas.

ROUSSELIN: I am more so than Gruchet, however, and I have recommended — but perhaps I ought to announce it in the public prints — the lowering of customs duties and of town taxes.

MUREL: Bravo!

ROUSSELIN: I ask frankly of the municipal powers for a better organising of juries; for the liberty of the press; and for the abolishing of all sinecure offices, and also of all titles of nobility.

MUREL: Very fine!

ROUSSELIN: I have also been urgent in the cause of universal suffrage. Does that surprise you? Nevertheless, that is my policy. To our new prefect, who supports the other side, I have written three letters, as a warning. I have, indeed! And I am ready to meet him face to face —even to insult him, if necessary. Tell that to your workmen!

MUREL [*aside*]: Can he be speaking seriously?

ROUSSELIN: You see, then, that in preferring Gruchet to me—because, I repeat, he boasts that he has your support—he has told it all over town!

MUREL: How do you know that I shall vote for him?

ROUSSELIN: Eh?

MUREL: In politics I hold fast to my own opinions. Now, his views seem to my mind not quite so progressive as yours. We must wait a bit. All is not over yet.

ROUSSELIN: Indeed, it is not all over, but I don't know what more I can do to please the electors. And I am greatly surprised to find that I have been so misunderstood by a man of your intelligence.

MUREL: You overwhelm me!

ROUSSELIN: I have no doubt as to the success of your career in the future.

MUREL: Indeed! Well, in that case—

ROUSSELIN: Proceed!

MUREL: Well, then, to meet confidence with confidence, I have a little confession to make to you. I did agree to help Gruchet after you had refused my request for your daughter's hand, and I own that I acted under the influence of anger.

ROUSSELIN [*pats* Murel *on the shoulder*]: All the better! That proves you have spirit.

MUREL: I cursed you as much as I adored your daughter.

ROUSSELIN: You dear boy! [*Takes* Murel's *hand*] Ah, your leaving me hurt me deeply!

MUREL: Seriously, Monsieur, if I cannot have Louise I shall die of grief!

ROUSSELIN: No, no! you must not die.

MUREL: You will give me some hope?

ROUSSELIN: After examination and mature reflection, your personal standing appears rather more advantageous than I thought when you first mentioned the matter to me.

MUREL: More advantageous?

ROUSSELIN: Yes, for besides your thirty thousand francs of salary—

MUREL [*timidly*]: Twenty thousand.

ROUSSELIN: Thirty thousand!—and a share in the stock of the company—there is your aunt to be considered, since you are her heir.

MUREL: Yes—with another nephew, a soldier.

ROUSSELIN: A soldier, eh? Well, there are always chances of—[*Makes gesture as if firing a gun*] The Bedouins! [*Laughs*]

MUREL [*laughs*]: Yes, yes, you are right! All women, even when they are old, change their minds very quickly, and my aunt is certainly capricious. But seriously, I have recently heard that she speaks very kindly of me sometimes.

ROUSSELIN [*aside*]: If that were only true! [*Aloud*] Well, dear boy, come around here this evening after dinner, and stand near my house, but don't appear as if you were looking for me. [*Exit.*

SCENE V.

MUREL: Come here this evening! That is rather encouraging—it is almost a consent. Arabella was right. [*Enter* Gruchet]

GRUCHET: Here I am! I have not lost time. What news? Tell me quickly.

MUREL: Gruchet, have you reflected seriously upon the matter you are considering?

GRUCHET: Why do you ask that?

MUREL: It is no light responsibility to be a deputy.

GRUCHET: I believe you!

MUREL: You will bring down upon yourself all sorts of scheming rascals and beggars.

GRUCHET: Oh, my good fellow, I am well accustomed to refusing people.

MUREL: It will seriously upset all your private affairs.

GRUCHET: Never! Don't you believe it!

MUREL: Besides, it would be necessary to live in Paris, and that would entail great expense.

GRUCHET: Very well, I will live in Paris, and hang the expense!

MUREL: Frankly, I don't see any particular advantage for you even if you should obtain the deputyship.

GRUCHET: You may think what you please. *I* see the advantage, myself.

MUREL: And you may fail of election, you know.

GRUCHET: Have you any reason to think that?

MUREL: Nothing very serious. But there is no denying that Rousselin has a firm hold on the public favour.

GRUCHET: Only a short time ago, you said he was an imbecile!

MUREL: That may not prevent him from succeeding.

GRUCHET: Then you advise me to give up the whole thing?

MUREL: Not absolutely. But it is always bad to have for an adversary a man of Rousselin's importance.

GRUCHET: His importance! Ha! ha!

MUREL: Remember, he has many friends; his manners are cordial and pleasing; and, while he manages the Conservatives very cleverly, he poses as a Republican.

GRUCHET: Everyone knows that.

MUREL: Oh, if you count on the good sense of the public—

GRUCHET: But why do you discourage me now, when everything is running as smoothly as if on wheels? Listen to me! No one suspects it, but through Félicité, my maid, I know all that goes on in Rousselin's household.

MUREL: Your method of gaining information is not particularly delicate!

GRUCHET: Why not?

MUREL: Nor even prudent; because they say that once you borrowed a considerable sum of money from Rousselin.

GRUCHET: They say that? Well?

MUREL: You ought first to repay him.

GRUCHET: For that matter, you ought to repay me the money I lent you a long time ago. Be just!

MUREL: In spite of my proofs of devoted friendship, and the good advice I have just given you, you speak to me like that! Please remember that without my influence you never can be elected!

Here I have been wearing myself out for you, although I have no personal interest in the matter.

GRUCHET: Who knows? I don't understand this business at all. First you push me ahead, then you pull me back. The money I owe to Rousselin! Let some one else pay it! I am not inexhaustible! And the bill at the café is going to be something terrible, because those lively fellows drink and drink, without knowing when to stop. Perhaps you think I am not worrying about that! This electioneering is a whirlpool that sucks down all one's money. [*Enter* Hombourg] Hombourg, here again?

HOMBOURG: Is Monsieur Rousselin at home?

GRUCHET: I know nothing about him.

HOMBOURG: One word! I own a little Normandy horse—not an expensive animal—which would be very useful to you in driving about the country on your electioneering business.

GRUCHET: I make all my trips on foot, thank you!

HOMBOURG: A rare chance, Monsieur Gruchet!

GRUCHET: Chances like that will be sure to turn up again.

HOMBOURG: I do not believe it.

GRUCHET: It is quite impossible for me to buy it at present.

HOMBOURG [*bows*]: At your service, Monsieur! [*Enters* Rousselin's *house*]

MUREL: Do you think Rousselin would have done that? That man keeps an inn, and he will try to turn all his customers against you. You may lose fifty votes through him. I am tired of trying to support vour cause!

GRUCHET: Keep cool! I own I did wrong. It was because you had just been worrying me with your remarks about Rousselin. And perhaps what you told me is not true, after all. From whom did you get the information? Only from Rousselin, I'll wager! Or possibly you are playing one of your own little jokes, just to test me. [*Noise without*]

MUREL: Listen!

GRUCHET: I hear.

MUREL: The noise is coming nearer.

VOICES [*without*]: Gruchet! Gruchet!

(*Enter* Félicité, L.)

FÉLICITÉ: Monsieur Gruchet, some one wishes to see you.

GRUCHET: Me?

FÉLICITÉ: Yes; come quickly!

GRUCHET: To see me? [*Exit hastily, with* Félicité. *Noise increases*]

MUREL [*about to go,* L.]: What a racket! What can be the matter? [*Exit.*

SCENE VI.

ROUSSELIN [*enters from the house*]: The people are becoming quite excited, apparently. Good!—that is, provided they are not getting excited against me!

VOICES [*from the café*]: Down with the *bourgeoisie*!

ROUSSELIN: Ha! I don't like that much!

(Gruchet *passes across the back of stage, trying to evade a crowd of men, who demand a speech from him*)

GRUCHET: Leave me, my friends! Let me alone! No, no! I tell you, I cannot make a speech!

ALL: Gruchet! Long live Gruchet, our deputy!

ROUSSELIN: What do they say — deputy?

HOMBOURG [*who has entered from* Rousselin's *house*]: And why not, since Bouvigny has withdrawn?

[Gruchet *and the crowd exit* C.

ROUSSELIN: It is not possible!

HOMBOURG: Certainly it is — the ministry has changed, Monsieur! The prefect has handed in his resignation, and he has just written to Bouvigny to advise him to do the same with regard to his own candidacy. [*Exit* C.

ROUSSELIN: Then — no one remains in the field as a candidate except — [*points to his breast*] myself! No, no — there is Gruchet! Gruchet! [*Reflects. Slight pause. Enter* Dodart] What do you wish from me?

SCENE VII.

DODART: I am here to render you a service, Monsieur.

ROUSSELIN: Coming from a faithful follower of the Count de Bouvigny, that astonishes me!

DODART: You will appreciate my action later. As the Count de Bouvigny has retired from the candidacy —

ROUSSELIN [*brusquely*]: It is true, then? He has retired?

DODART: Yes, for certain reasons.

ROUSSELIN: Personal reasons.

DODART: Monsieur—

ROUSSELIN: I say he had strong personal reasons, that's all!

DODART: Very likely. Now, permit me to warn you of something very important. Those persons who are interested in your success—and I am one of them, I assure you!—are beginning to fear the violence of your adversaries.

ROUSSELIN: Well? What of that?

DODART: Perhaps you have not heard the insurrectionary cries that Gruchet's followers have been uttering. This village Catiline—

ROUSSELIN [*aside*]: Village Catiline! What a good phrase! I must remember that.

DODART: He is capable of anything, Monsieur. And perhaps, thanks to the present crazy mood of the people, he will become one of our tribunes!

ROUSSELIN [*aside*]: By Jove! I am beginning to be afraid he will!

DODART: But the Conservatives have not given up the fight, by any means. First of all, they wish to vote for an honest man, who will guarantee —[Rousselin *makes a movement*]—Oh! they will not ask him to go back on any of his principles; they will require only a few simple concessions.

ROUSSELIN: And that devil of a Murel has spoiled my chances!

DODART: Unfortunately, that seems to be the case!

ROUSSELIN [*thoughtfully*]: Alas! yes!

DODART: As notary and as citizen, I deplore it! Ah! it was a fine dream—the idea of an alliance between the *bourgeoisie* and the nobility, cemented

by the marriage of your daughter to a son of the house of Bouvigny! The Count himself said to me an hour ago — will you believe what I am about to say?

ROUSSELIN: I have the utmost confidence in your word, Monsieur!

DODART: The Count said, with the chivalric air so characteristic of him: "I am not at all angry with Monsieur Rousselin —"

ROUSSELIN: Neither have I any resentment against him, upon my honour!

DODART: And he added: "I should like nothing better, if Monsieur Rousselin does not find it unsuitable — "

ROUSSELIN: Find what unsuitable?

DODART: "Than to join forces with him, in the interest of our canton and of the public morals."

ROUSSELIN: Indeed! I will join him in that with pleasure.

DODART: Here comes the Count now! [*Makes signal;* Bouvigny *comes forward*]

BOUVIGNY [*bows*]: Monsieur!

ROUSSELIN [*glances around*]: I am just observing whether any one —

BOUVIGNY: No one saw me enter here — do not be disturbed! Monsieur Rousselin, I beg you to accept the assurance of my regrets regarding the matter of —

ROUSSELIN: Oh, there is no harm in —

DODART: In acknowledging one's errors, eh?

BOUVIGNY: I admit it; but pray consider that my affection may have exaggerated the importance of certain principles.

ROUSSELIN: Ah, Monsieur, I honour high principles!

BOUVIGNY: Consider also the malady from which my poor son suffers.

ROUSSELIN: He did not appear ill when he was here a few hours ago.

DODART: Oh, yes! Monsieur Onésime is very much indisposed. But he has the courage to hide his suffering. Poor fellow! his nerves are so sensitive!

ROUSSELIN [*aside*]: Aha! I see your game! Well, you shall help me in mine! [*Aloud*] I understand. You mean that Monsieur Onésime, having conceived certain hopes —

BOUVIGNY: Exactly!

ROUSSELIN: It must pain him very much —

BOUVIGNY: It breaks his heart, Monsieur!

ROUSSELIN: To see you abandon your candidacy so suddenly!

DODART [*aside*]: He is laughing at us!

ROUSSELIN: When you had already a number of votes!

BOUVIGNY [*with dignity*]: I had a great many, I assure you!

ROUSSELIN [*smiles*]: Not all, however!

DODART: Perhaps not so many among the working classes in the town, an immense number but in the country!

ROUSSELIN: Ah, if you count on —

BOUVIGNY: Allow me! First, the commune of Bouvigny, where I live, is in my favor, naturally. Then there are the villages of Saint-Léonard, Valencourt, and La Coudrette.

ROUSSELIN [*quickly*]: No, not that!

BOUVIGNY: And why not that?

ROUSSELIN [*embarrassed*]: Why, I believe — [*Aside*] Murel must have deceived me about that.

BOUVIGNY: I am equally certain to carry Grumesnil, Ypremesnil, and Les Arbois.

DODART [*reads from list which he takes from his pocket-book*]: Châtillon, Colange, Heurtaux, Lenneval, Bahurs, Saint-Filleul, Grand-Chêne, Roche-Aubert, Fortinet!

ROUSSELIN [*aside*]: This is alarming!

DODART [*reads*]: Monicamp, Dehaut, Lampérière, Saint-Nicaise, Vieville, Sirvin, Château-Regnier, La Chapelle, Lebarrois, Mont-Suleau.

ROUSSELIN [*aside*]: I begin to think I don't know the geography of this district!

BOUVIGNY: All these, to say nothing of the fact that I have many friends in the various communes who —

ROUSSELIN [*overcome*]: Oh, I believe you, Monsieur!

BOUVIGNY: These good people hardly know what to do now. They are, of course, very desirous to please me, and will do whatever I wish, obeying me as one man; and if I should instruct them to vote for — no matter whom — you, for instance —

ROUSSELIN: Good heavens! I am not so strongly opposed as —

BOUVIGNY: Opposition is sometimes very useful.

ROUSSELIN: As an instrument of war, let us say. But it need not be a matter of counteraction; why should we not consolidate?

DODART: By all means, let us consolidate.

ROUSSELIN: I have a horror of new-fangled utopian ideas, and of subversive doctrines. There is talk of re-establishing the divorce courts — that must be looked after. And the press demands recognition in anything it may choose to do, no matter how great the license.

DODART: Abominable!

BOUVIGNY: The country is infested with quantities of worthless books.

ROUSSELIN: Unfortunately, it has not the proper persons in authority to conduct its affairs. Ah! there is so much high-mindedness to be found among the nobility! On that point I fully agree with some of the most prominent public men in England.

BOUVIGNY: Your words are as welcome as a refreshing breeze, and if we might hope—

ROUSSELIN [*mysteriously*]: To tell the truth, Monsieur, the democracy really terrifies me. I do not know what madmen my seize upon me, what malicious impulse—

BOUVIGNY [*suppresses a smile*]: Oh, come! I think you go rather too far.

ROUSSELIN: No, no, I was guilty of—you see, I am really a staunch Conservative, but perhaps I have not fully understood certain shades of meaning—

DODART: All honest men understand one another!

ROUSSELIN [*shakes hands with* Bouvigny]: Certainly, my dear Count, certainly! Monsieur Dodart is quite right!

SCENE VIII.

(*Enter* Murel, Ledru, Onésime, *and several* Workmen)

MUREL: Thank heaven! I find you without your electors, my dear Rousselin!

BOUVIGNY [*aside*]: I thought they were at swords' points!

MUREL: Here are a few more voters. I have shown them that the ideas of Gruchet do not meet the requirements of our time; and now that I have explained to them what you said to me this morning, they understand you better. These worthy citizens are not only republicans, but socialists!

BOUVIGNY [*jumps*]: What! Socialists!

ROUSSELIN: He brings me socialists!

DODART: Socialists! I think my presence is no longer required here! [*Slips away noiselessly*]

LEDRU: Yes, citizen! We are socialists!

ROUSSELIN: Well — ahem! — I see no harm in that.

BOUVIGNY: And just now you were declaiming against this sort of rabble!

ROUSSELIN: Pardon me! There are several ways of looking at these matters.

ONÉSIME [*springing from a chair*]: No doubt — several ways!

BOUVIGNY [*scandalised*]: What! even my son?

MUREL [*to* Onésime]: What are you doing here?

ONÉSIME: I heard that something of a political nature was going on at Monsieur Rousselin's house, and I wished to show him that my sentiments were in sympathy with his own.

MUREL [*aside*]: Intriguing little puppy!

BOUVIGNY: I never expected, my son, to see you, in the presence of the author of your being, renounce the faith of your ancestors!

ROUSSELIN: Very fine!

LEDRU: And why "very fine"? This gentleman is the Count de Bouvigny [*to* Murel, *indicating* Rousselin], and you would have us believe that Monsieur Rousselin demands the abolition of all titles.

ROUSSELIN: Certainly!

BOUVIGNY: What! He demands that?

LEDRU: Yes, indeed! So he says!

BOUVIGNY: Ah, this is too much! [*About to go*]

ROUSSELIN [*tries to hold* Bouvigny]: I do not wish to destroy our mutual understanding so abruptly. Listen to me! Many of these men are simply mistaken in judgment. Let us manage them together.

BOUVIGNY [*loudly*]: No more of your management for me, Monsieur! A man of honour does not ally himself with the advocates of disorder, and I tell you, fairly and squarely, that I will have no more to do with you or your election. Come, Onésime! [*Exit the* Bouvignys.

LEDRU: So he was in favor of your election, was he? We all know what that would mean for us! I wish you good-day, Monsieur!

ROUSSELIN: In order to stand by my convictions, I have sacrificed a friend of thirty years' acquaintance!

LEDRU: We demand no sacrifices! But you blow first hot and then cold, and I think you are a regular old humbug! Come along, friends! Let us go back to Gruchet. Are you coming, Murel?

MUREL: I will be with you in a moment.

[*Exit* Ledru *and* Workmen.

SCENE IX.

MUREL: You must see, my dear friend, that you have put me in a very embarrassing situation.

ROUSSELIN: Perhaps you do not think that I am in one also.

MUREL: See here! you must settle on some decided line of action at once. Be on one side or the other. But decide quickly—let us have an end of this dilly-dallying.

ROUSSELIN: But why be so radical, one way or the other? Is there not something worth having in all parties?

MUREL: Yes! Their votes!

ROUSSELIN: You are very witty, upon my word! Your humour is delicate, yet always irresistible. I am not surprised that a certain person loves you!

MUREL: Some one loves me! Who is it?

ROUSSELIN: Innocent! A little lady named Louise!

MUREL: Oh, what happiness! Thank you, thank you a thousand times! Now I shall do some lively work in your behalf. I will convince those fellows that they did not understand you—that it was all a mistake. As to *The Impartial*—

ROUSSELIN: There, at least, you are master.

MUREL: Not altogether. We depend upon Paris, which gives the word of command. You must be very much fatigued.

ROUSSELIN: Oh, hang the fatigue!

MUREL: So much the better! But now, tell me, how shall I make Julien understand the reason why we wish him to do exactly the contrary thing from the orders he received this morning?

ROUSSELIN: I don't know. What *shall* we do?

MUREL: Wait a moment! In your house there is a person that has a certain influence over him.

ROUSSELIN: Who is it?

MUREL: Miss Arabella. From something she said to me, I have reason to believe that she is interested in the young poet!

ROUSSELIN: Ha! ha! The romantic verses were addressed to the English girl, after all, eh?

MUREL: I cannot answer for the verses, but I believe they are in love with each other.

ROUSSELIN: I was sure of it! Never in my life have I been deceived in matters of that sort! Well, so long as my daughter is not concerned, there is no danger, and I should have a good laugh if —but I must speak to my wife about it. I must tell her everything.

MUREL: Meanwhile, I will try to warm up those voters who were rather chilled by your lukewarm philosophy.

ROUSSELIN: Don't go too far, for fear Bouvigny—

MUREL: Have no fear! I will re-paint your patriotism in glowing colors! [*Exit.*

ROUSSELIN [*alone*]: We must be shrewd, quick, and subtle!

SCENE X.

(*Enter* Mme. Rousselin *and* Miss Arabella)

ROUSSELIN [*to* Arabella]: My dear child,—my almost fatherly affection for you allows me to address you thus—I am about to ask a great favour of you. Will you meet Monsieur Julien Duprat and take a short walk with him?

ARABELLA [*joyfully*]: You wish me to do that!

MME. R. [*haughtily*]: What an extraordinary request!

ARABELLA: Monsieur Duprat strolls along this promenade every evening, smoking his cigar. It would be very easy to meet him.

MME. R.: It would be highly unconventional! It seems to me that I am the proper person to meet this gentleman.

ROUSSELIN: Well, yes, I suppose it would be rather more suitable for a married woman to have the interview with him.

ARABELLA: But I should like very much to meet him!

MME. R.: I forbid you to do so, Mademoiselle!

ARABELLA: I obey, Madame! [*Aside, as she goes up stage*] Why should she wish to prevent me from seeing him? I will try to find out! [*Exit.*

MME. R.: My dear, you have very singular ideas sometimes! Fancy your asking a young woman, our daughter's governess, to do a thing like that! Did you wish her to see him with regard to something concerning your election?

ROUSSELIN: Yes, of course! And it struck me that Arabella, because of the evident fancy she has for the young man, was the very person to have an interview with him.

MME. R.: Ah, you do not know her! She is both sly and violent, and under her romantic airs she hides a small, mean nature. I think we should do well to keep a close watch of her.

ROUSSELIN: Perhaps you are right. Here comes Julien. You know, of course, the general import of what I wish to have said to him, with regard to the course his journal is to take.

MME. R.: Leave him to me! I shall know how to manage him.

ROUSSELIN: Very well. I trust everything to you. [*Enter* Julien. Rousselin *bows to him and goes out. Twilight comes on*]

Scene XI.

(Madame Rousselin, Julien)

Julien [*sees* Mme. R.]: She! [*Throws away his cigar*] Alone! What shall I say? [*Bows*] Madame!

Mme. R.: Monsieur Julien Duprat, I believe.

Julien: Alas! yes, Madame.

Mme. R.: And why "alas"?

Julien: I have the misfortune to be connected with a journal the sentiments of which must be displeasing to you.

Mme. R.: Well — yes, so far as its political tone is concerned.

Julien: If you only knew how distasteful are the affairs that occupy my time!

Mme. R.: But a bright intellect may apply its efforts to almost anything without being lowered in the least. Your disdain of your occupation is not surprising. When a man can write such remarkable verses as you have produced —

Julien: Ah, now you are unkind, Madame! Why do you laugh at me?

Mme. R.: I do not, I assure you. I make no profession of being a literary critic, but it seems to me that you have a brilliant future, Monsieur.

Julien: No, such possibilities are closed to me, by reason of my enforced environment. Art does not flourish in the provinces. A poet who finds himself compelled to remain there, and is obliged by poverty to perform uncongenial work, is like a man trying to run in a muddy field. A weight

attaches itself to his feet, dragging him down, and the faster he tries to run, the deeper he sinks. And something within him continually protests and complains. Then, to console himself for his hard fate, he dreams of what might have been, and time slips away, until finally he forces himself to be satisfied with his own mediocrity, and feels only resignation—the calmer phase of despair!

MME. R.: I understand you, and I pity you!

JULIEN: Ah, Madame! your compassion is sweet, although it only augments my sadness!

MME. R.: Have courage! Success will surely come to you some day!

JULIEN: Here, in my isolation, is it possible?

MME. R.: But, instead of flying from the world, approach it! Its language is not like your own—but learn it! Submit to its demands. Reputation and power are gained only by coming in contact with people; and, since society is naturally a state of war, range yourself on the side of the strong, the rich, the happy. Of your inmost thoughts and feelings I will not speak, for reasons of—prudence! When you go to Paris to live, as we intend to do—

JULIEN: But, Madame, I have not the means to live in Paris.

MME. R.: Who knows? To a man with your versatility of talent nothing is difficult; and you must use it in such a way as to make the right persons show their gratitude for it. But it is growing late! I hope for the pleasure of seeing you again, Monsieur! [*Curtseys, and goes up stage*]

JULIEN: Oh, do not leave me, in heaven's name! I have waited so long for this moment! I have vainly tried so many devices in order to approach you! Besides, I did not fully understand your last words. You appear to expect me to perform some service. Do you wish to give me a command? Give it, then—I will obey!

MME. R.: What devotion! [*Darkness increases*]

JULIEN: I tell you, Madame, you occupy my whole life! Many a time, as twilight comes on, do I climb one of these hills to breathe a freer air; and when I turn my gaze in the direction of the town, my eyes wander, in spite of myself, towards the dwelling that shelters you—this house, that gleams like a pearl in a green setting. The sight of a royal palace would not give me so deep a feeling of covetousness! Sometimes I see you in the street—a dazzling vision! I stop! I try to walk near you, unobserved, following your dainty, airy veil, that floats about your head like a blue cloud. Often I have stood outside your garden gate, only to catch a glimpse of you and hear the rustle of your skirt as you walked among the violet-beds. Your slightest word, your most ordinary phrase, possesses a value quite unintelligible to anyone but me; and I treasure every utterance like a prize! Do not drive me away! Pardon me! I dared to send you some verses. They were lost, like the flowers that I gather in the country without being able to offer them to you; lost, like the words I murmur to you at night—words that you never hear! You are my inspiration, my muse, the embodiment of my ideal, my delight, my torment!

MME. R.: Calm yourself, Monsieur! This exaggeration—

JULIEN: Ah, I belong to the days of 1830! I learned to read by studying *Hernani* and often have I wished I could have been the romantic Lara! I execrate my dull contemporaries, the commonplaces of modern life, the ignominy of matter-of-fact happiness! The grand passion that caused the lyres of the great masters to vibrate, swells my own breast! In my thoughts you are inextricably entwined with all that is beautiful in the universe! Everything in the world is influenced by your personality! These trees were made only to shade your face; the night comes only to shelter you and to soothe your spirit; the stars, that beam as softly as your eyes, were made to shed their light upon you!

MME. R.: The reading of romantic literature has made you over-enthusiastic, I fear! What confidence can a woman have in a man that cannot control his language or his passion? I believe you are sincere. But you are young, and you ignore certain necessary restraints. Some women in my place would have taken offence at the freedom of your language. You must promise me—

JULIEN: But you tremble, too, Madame! I knew it! No woman could repel such love as mine!

MME. R.: My courage in listening to you surprises even myself. The people hereabouts have malicious tongues, Monsieur. The slightest suspicion of scandal would ruin us.

JULIEN: Fear nothing! My lips shall be sealed, my eyes closed, my manner indifferent; and if I should present myself at your house—

MME. R.: But, Monsieur, my husband—

JULIEN: Do not speak to me of that man!

MME. R.: I must defend him.

JULIEN: I have done that—for love of you!

MME. R.: He will hear of your defense of him, and you never will have reason to regret your generosity.

JULIEN: Let me kneel before you, that I may look at you more closely. I will do all that you wish, and boldly, too, for I have gained new strength. I wish to become a part of your life, to enjoy with you all the intoxications that life affords; all the enchantments of art, all the blessings of heaven!

ARABELLA [*enters softly, and slips behind a tree*]: Aha! I was sure of it!

MME. R.: I expect from you an immediate proof of confidence and love.

JULIEN: Only tell me what you wish!

SCENE XII.

(*The same, then* Murel *and* Gruchet, *followed by* Rousselin)

MME R.: Some one approaches! I must go into the house.

JULIEN: Not yet! [*Enter* Murel, L. 3. E., *walking leisurely across back of stage*]

GRUCHET [*enters* L. 3. E., *running after* Murel]: Give me back my money!

MUREL [*still walks slowly*]: Go away! You annoy me!

GRUCHET: Rascal!

MUREL [*turns suddenly and strikes* Gruchet]: Thief!

ROUSSELIN [*enters just as the blow is struck*]: Why, who is here? What is the matter?

JULIEN: Grant me only this favour, Madame! [*Kisses her hand audibly*]

ARABELLA [*recognizes* Julien]: Ah! it is he! [*Runs off*]

ROUSSELIN: What is going on here? [*Sees* Arabella *running*] Arabella! I will put her out of the house to-morrow!

ACT III.

Scene: *A public ball-room in the Salon de Flore. At the back, facing the audience, a platform for an orchestra. A bass-viol stands in a corner,* L. *Several musical instruments hang on the walls; also a stand of tri-colored flags. In the middle of the platform are a table and chairs; two other tables stand* R. *and* L. *on the stage proper. A lower platform is placed directly in front of the orchestra platform. Many chairs stand* R. *and* L. *At the rear is a practicable balcony.*

Scene I.

ROUSSELIN [*standing* C.]: I think it would sound well if I should compare Anarchy to a serpent—and a hydra-headed one at that! And Power—I might call that a vampire. No, that word is a little too pretentious. I must find some effective phrase that will arouse enthusiasm, such as: We must close the era of revolutions!—comrades!—indefeasible rights!—and some words ending in "ism,"—parliamentarism, and things like that!

I must be perfectly calm and collected. The electors will arrive soon. Everything is ready; the committee was organized last night. [*Points to various places on the stage*] Here the committee will sit. There is the place for the President. [*Points to table in the middle of the platform*] His two secretaries will sit one on each side of him. [*Steps up on the lower platform*] I shall stand here, facing the company. But what shall I lean upon? I must have something to lean upon—to represent a tribune. Wait! I have it! [*Steps down and takes a chair from the stage, remounts lower platform and places chair before him*] Good! And I must have a glass of water, because I begin to feel very thirsty already. [*Takes a glass of water which he finds on the president's table, and puts it on his own chair*] Let it stand there! Shall I have enough sugar! [*Peeps into the sugar-bowl on the president's table*] Oh, yes!

Now!—everyone is seated. The president opens the meeting, and some one begins to speak. He appeals to me, to ask me, for instance—But first, who is it that calls on me? Where is the person? I will suppose him to be on my right. I turn my head quickly. He must not be too far away. [*Steps down to arrange a chair* R.; *remounts platform*] I preserve my calm and dignified air, with one hand thrust in the front of my waistcoat. I wonder whether I should not have looked better in my frock-coat. This coat is easier for the arms. But I rather think the frock-coat would be the proper thing, for they say the common people like to have a speaker pay them the compliment of wearing good clothes.

Let me see, how is my cravat? [*Takes small mirror from pocket and examines his appearance; then puts it back in pocket*] I think my collar should be a little lower. [*Settles collar*] Not too low, however. I don't want to look like a romantic tenor! I feel sure all will go well, with a word from Murel now and then, to encourage me. Oh, it will be all right! Only—I do feel a bit nervous, and a slight indigestion—[*Drinks from glass of water*] There! It is nothing serious. All great orators have had to begin some time. Come, come, Rousselin! no more weakness! One man is as good as another, and I am better than a great many! This excitement is going to my head like a hot drink. I must put on a bold face! [*Strikes attitude*]

And do you address yourself to me, Monsieur?—This speaker must be in front of me. [*Steps down and places chair C. of stage; remounts platform*]—Do you address yourself to me?—I must put both hands on my breast and bow slightly. [*Does so*]—To me, who, during forty years—to me, whose patriotism—to me, who—to me, for whom—then, suddenly: Ah, you cannot really believe it, Monsieur!—Then he will sit staring at me, and not moving. [*Holds his head very high, his right forefinger pointing upward*] He says: "Your proofs, then! Give us your proofs! Ah, take care! You cannot juggle with the public faith!" I say nothing. "You are silent!" he cries; "Your silence condemns you! I will take action upon it!" Now I give him a little irony. I must say something cutting and assume a laugh of superiority.—Ha!

ha! ha! I acknowledge myself completely vanquished, Monsieur! — But two other men, over there — [*places two chairs*] — I recognize them — they cry out that I have urged the people to insurrection against our institutions — no matter what! Then I say in a furious tone, — What! You would obstruct the march of progress? — Development of the word "progress" — from the astronomer, with his telescope, who, to aid the hardy mariner — and so on, and so on, — To the humble village workman, gaining his living by the sweat of his brow; the proletarian of our cities; the artist, whose inspiration — and so on. I'll keep talking until I find just the right phrase to introduce the word *bourgeoisie*. Then follows praise of the *bourgeoisie;* the third estate; the instructions of the electors to the deputies; 'eighty-nine; our commerce; the wealth of the nation; the development of the public welfare by the rise and progress of the middle classes. Then a workman calls out: "And the people, — what will you do for them?" I reply: — Ah! the people — the great people! And I give him a great deal of palaver on that subject. I exalt the character of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who was once a servant; Jacquard, the weaver; Marceau, the tailor, — and all the servants and all the tailors will feel flattered! Then I will thunder against the corruption and heartlessness of the rich. — For what reason do they reproach you, — the people? For being poor! — Bravos! — Ah! to the man who knows all your virtues, how sweet is the duty of becoming your defender! I always feel a noble pride when I press the cal-

loused hand of an honest working-man, because his grasp, though perhaps a little rough, betokens genuineness and sincerity; because all differences of rank, title, and fortune are now — thank God! — things of the past; and nothing can compare with the sterling merit and true heart of a man of the people! — I tap myself on the breast. "Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!" [*Claps his hands, turning a little,* L.]

WAITER [*enters,* L.]: Monsieur Rousselin, the gentlemen have arrived.

ROUSSELIN: Let us retire, so that I shall not appear to have been — Shall I have time to get my other coat? I think so — if I run!

[*Exit* Rousselin *and* Waiter.

SCENE II.

(*Enter all the Electors; the* President, Voinchet, Marchais, Hombourg, Heurtelot, Onésime, *the* Village Policeman, Beaumesnil, Ledru, *and others*)

VOINCHET: Quite a crowd of us! I have an idea that this is going to be rather amusing.

LEDRU: For a political meeting, I should think a more suitable place could have been chosen than the Salon de Flore.

BEAUMESNIL: Since there is no other public hall in the neighbourhood, I don't see how we could do any better. Which man are you going to nominate, Monsieur Marchais?

MARCHAIS: Oh, Lord! Rousselin, of course. It seems we must settle on him, after all.

LEDRU: I don't see why! I'm going to stir up some kind of row at this meeting!

VOINCHET: Look! There is the son of Bouvigny!

BEAUMESNIL: The father will not come here—he is too shrewd.

THE PRESIDENT: Order!

POLICEMAN: Order!

PRESIDENT: Gentlemen, it has been decided that meetings shall be held in order to discuss the merits of the candidates for the impending election. To-night we shall speak of the honourable Monsieur Rousselin; to-morrow night of the honourable Monsieur Gruchet. The meeting is open.

(*Enter* Rousselin, *in a frock-coat, from a small door behind the president's chair. Salutes the company, and takes his place behind the chair on the lower platform*)

VOINCHET: I demand that the candidate shall speak to us first about the railways.

ROUSSELIN [*coughs, and takes a sip of water*]: If any person had said, in the days of Charlemagne, or even in the time of Louis the Fourteenth, that a day would come when, in three hours, it would be possible to go—

VOINCHET: Oh, I don't mean that! Are you of the opinion that we should approve of a grant to a railway that shall run through Saint-Mathieu, or to one that will take in Bonneval?—which would be a hundred times better.

AN ELECTOR: Saint-Mathieu is more convenient for the larger part of the public. Declare yourself in favour of that, Monsieur Rousselin!

ROUSSELIN: Why should I not speak in favour of the general development of these gigantic enterprises, that change the situation of capitals, prove the genius of man, and carry prosperity into the midst of all communities?

HOMBOURG: That is not true; they often ruin them!

ROUSSELIN: What, Monsieur! Would you oppose the march of progress? Progress, which, from the astronomer—

HOMBOURG: But the railway passengers—

ROUSSELIN: With his telescope—

HOMBOURG: Ah, if you try to shut me up—

PRESIDENT: Monsieur Hombourg has the floor!

HOMBOURG: Travellers will never stop in our part of the country.

VOINCHET: He is an inn-keeper—that is the reason why he complains!

HOMBOURG: And a very good inn it is, too!

ELECTORS: Enough! enough! Sit down! [Hombourg *is forced to sit down*]

PRESIDENT: No violence, gentlemen!

POLICEMAN: Silence!

HOMBOURG [*to* Rousselin]: That's the way you defend our interests!

ROUSSELIN: I declare—

AN ELECTOR: He must uphold free trade!

ROUSSELIN: Certainly! By means of the untaxed transmission of merchandise, a day of universal brotherhood among all mankind will dawn—

AN ELECTOR: We must admit English woollens, and proclaim the freedom of the hosiery trade!

ROUSSELIN: And the exemption of everything!

SEVERAL ELECTORS: Yes! yes!

OTHER ELECTORS: No! no!

ROUSSELIN: May heaven grant us abundance of grain and cattle!

A FARMER [*wearing a peasant's blouse*]: You are a pretty chap to talk about agriculture.

ROUSSELIN: I will speak to you immediately on that subject. [*Drinks. A pause*]

HEURTELOT [*speaks from the balcony, to which he has mounted unobserved*]: What is your opinion on the subject of blind beetles, Monsieur?

ALL [*laugh loudly*]: Ha! ha! ha!

PRESIDENT: A little less levity, gentlemen!

POLICEMAN: No disorder! In the name of the law, sit down! [*Electors that have sprung up re-seat themselves, and quiet is gradually restored*]

MARCHAIS [*pushed forward by his neighbors*]: Monsieur Rousselin, we should like to know your ideas about taxes.

ROUSSELIN: Taxes! [*Aside*] Great heavens! [*Aloud*] Oh, certainly! Taxes are disagreeable but—necessary! They may be compared to a pump, which sucks up from the earth a fertilizing element that expands under the sun's rays. It remains to be seen whether the means justify the end;—and if—as an illustration—one should happen to exhaust it—

PRESIDENT [*leans toward* Rousselin]: Charming comparison!

VOINCHET: All land-owners are over-taxed.

HEURTELOT: And we have to pay more than thirty sous' tax on a litre of cognac.

LEDRU: The navy devours our earnings!

BEAUMESNIL: Does the country really need the Botanical Gardens, I ask?

ROUSSELIN: There is no doubt that we should begin at once to practise great economy!

ALL: Good! Good!

ROUSSELIN: And the parsimonious government, whereas it ought to—

BEAUMESNIL: Bring up all our children at its own expense!

MARCHAIS: Protect commerce!

FARMER: Encourage agriculture!

ROUSSELIN: Certainly, certainly! You are all quite right!

BEAUMESNIL: Furnish water and gas free in every house!

ROUSSELIN: Um! Possibly—yes!

HOMBOURG: You are forgetting all about the livery business.

ROUSSELIN: Oh, not at all, not at all! But permit me to resume the thread of my discourse, and to group—

LEDRU: We know your way of getting around everybody! But if you had Gruchet before you—

ROUSSELIN: And do you compare me to Gruchet?—me, who have seen during the past forty years,—me, whose patriotism—ah! how little you know me, Monsieur!

LEDRU: Yes, I do compare him to you, I tell you!

ROUSSELIN: That village Catiline!

HEURTELOT [*from the balcony*]: Who the deuce was Catiline, eh?

ROUSSELIN: He was a celebrated conspirator, who, in Rome—

LEDRU: But Gruchet is not a conspirator.

HEURTELOT: And do you belong to the police, Monsieur?

ALL [*speaking confusedly*]: He is! He is! No, he is not! [*Great disorder*]

ROUSSELIN: Citizens! For heaven's sake! I beg of you, listen to me!

MARCHAIS: Well, we are listening. [*All become suddenly quiet.* Rousselin *tries to speak, but remains silent. Roars of laughter from the crowd*]

POLICEMAN: Silence!

HEURTELOT: He must explain his views as to the right to work.

ALL: Yes! yes! what about a man's right to work?

ROUSSELIN: Masses of books have been written on that subject. [*Murmurs*] Ah, you know that, do you? Well, have you read them?

HEURTELOT: No!

ROUSSELIN: *I* know them by heart! And if, like me, you had passed many nights in the solitude of your apartment, studying—

HEURTELOT: There! that's enough about you! What about the right to work?

ROUSSELIN: Oh! Ah! Without doubt, everyone ought to work.

HEURTELOT: And to demand work!

MARCHAIS: But suppose one has no need to work?

ROUSSELIN: Oh, never mind that point!

MARCHAIS: What! Would you attack property-owners?

ROUSSELIN: Absurd! When did I do that?

MARCHAIS [*jumps up on the stage*]: Ah, you force me to put myself forward!

ELECTORS [*from the right*]: Come down!

ELECTORS [*from the left*]: No; let him stay!

ROUSSELIN: Yes, let him remain. I admit the contradiction. I am in favour of liberty before all!

[*Applause from the right, murmurs from the left.* Marchais *turns towards* Rousselin] Does the word "liberty" choke you, Monsieur? It is because you do not in the least understand the meaning of economy — the value of humanitarianism. The press has elucidated the matter somewhat; and the press — mark it well, fellow-citizens — is a torch, a sentinel that —

BEAUMESNIL: Get back to the question!

MARCHAIS: Yes, the question of property.

ROUSSELIN: Well, like you, I love it! I am a property-owner myself! You see, therefore, that we are agreed upon that point.

MARCHAIS [*embarrassed*]: Well! — hum! — well!

LEDRU [*mockingly*]: Ah, the poor grocer! [*Laughter*]

ROUSSELIN: One word more! [*To* Marchais] I am about to convince you. Isn't it true that we ought, as much as possible, to democratize silver and republicanize the circulating medium? The more it circulates, the more of it falls into the pockets of the people, and consequently into yours. Now let us consider the matter of credit.

MARCHAIS: There should not be any credit!

ROUSSELIN: Oh, really —

LECRU: What! No credit?

ROUSSELIN: You are right to protest, Monsieur Ledru, because if credit is withdrawn there is no more money; and, on the other hand, it is money that forms the basis of credit. The two terms are correlative. [*Shakes* Marchais *gently by the arm*] Do you understand that the terms are correlative? You do not answer. Your silence condemns you. I shall take action upon it!

ALL: No! No! Enough! Enough! [Marchais *returns to his place*]

ROUSSELIN: Thus, my fellow-citizens, is the great question of labour settled! To sum up,—no property, no work! A man creates labour because he is rich, and without work there will be no riches. You work, not to become property-owners, because you are that already. Your trade is your capital, and you are all capitalists!

FARMER: Queer kind of capitalists!

MARCHAIS: You mix everything up very strangely, Monsieur!

LEDRU: He makes fun of everyone!

ALL: Yes! Yes! He laughs at us! Let us adjourn! Open the doors! Adjourn!

PRESIDENT: This is intolerable! One cannot—

POLICEMAN: I shall clear the way. [*Enter* Murel]

ROUSSELIN [*aside*]: Murel! At last!

LEDRU: Let the candidate explain the eulogies of the opinions of the Count de Bouvigny, which he made in your presence. [*To the* Workmen] You were there, some of you.

ROUSSELIN: But—I—I—

LEDRU: He is lost!

HEURTELOT: Catch him with a boat-hook! [*Laughter*]

VOINCHET: Call a doctor! [*Louder laughter*]

MUREL: I, too, was present, gentlemen! The honourable Monsieur Rousselin appeared to condescend to agree with the sentiments of the Count de Bouvigny. He does not seek to hide the fact; he even boasts of it!

ROUSSELIN [*proudly*]: Ah!

MUREL: And it was precisely because of the electors who surrounded him that, in order to strengthen

their convictions and to make them see how far certain persons would go in—

ROUSSELIN: Obscurantism!

MUREL: Exactly! It was, I say, a bit of parliamentary tactics, a ruse, quite legitimate, to—pardon the expression!—catch them in a net!

HEURTELOT: That's all too deep for us!

LEDRU: You are right! it was the conduct of a mountebank.

MUREL: But I—

HEURTELOT: Do not defend him!

LEDRU: And this is the man that promised to box the prefect's ears!

ROUSSELIN: And why not?

POLICEMAN [*taps* Rousselin *lightly on the shoulder*]: Gently, Monsieur Rousselin, gently!

ALL: Enough! Enough! Adjourn! Adjourn! [*All rise.* Rousselin *makes a despairing gesture; then turns to the president, who is about to go*]

PRESIDENT: A rather unfavourable meeting, my dear sir! Let us hope that some other time—

ROUSSELIN [*observes* Murel *about to go*]: Murel is going, too! [*To* Marchais, *who passes near him*] Marchais! Oh, it is too bad! too bad!

MARCHAIS: What can you expect, holding such opinions as yours? [*Exit all the Electors, leaving* Rousselin, Onésime *and a* Waiter.

SCENE III.

ROUSSELIN [*descends from platform*]: Farewell, my dreams! Nothing is left for me now but to fly, or to throw myself in the water! They will de-

molish me! [*Looks at the chairs*] They sat there,—but instead of the delighted crowd, whose applause I heard in imagination—ah! [*The* Waiter *begins to arrange the chairs in orderly rows*] Ah, fatal ambition! as ruinous to kings as to men of lower rank! And I did not get a chance to make my speech—they cut me off every time! Ah, I suffer! [*To the* Waiter] Take away all those chairs—I have no more need of them. [*Aside*] The sight of them gets on my nerves!

WAITER [*addresses* Onésime, *whom he discovers sitting in the corner, behind the bass-viol*]: Do you intend to remain there, Monsieur?

ONÉSIME [*comes forward timidly*]: Monsieur Rousselin!

ROUSSELIN: Ah, is it you, Onésime?

ONÉSIME: I wish I could find something consoling to say to you, because you have my entire sympathy.

ROUSSELIN: Thank you! Everyone else has abandoned me—even Murel.

ONÉSIME: He has just gone out with Monsieur Dodart's clerk.

ROUSSELIN: I might run and catch him! [*Looks out of the window*] There is still a crowd in the street, and they are capable of committing any outrage upon me if I should go out.

ONÉSIME: I hardly think that, Monsieur.

ROUSSELIN: Hasn't it been proved within the walls of this room? They would insult me still worse if I should show myself to them now. Oh, the villainous populace! I can understand Nero's feelings!

ONÉSIME: When my father received from the prefect a letter telling him he had no chance of election, he was very much disappointed and cast down, as you are. But his philosophy soon enabled him to get over it.

ROUSSELIN: Tell me — you, whom I always thought a good fellow — you will not deceive me?

ONÉSIME: Oh, Monsieur!

ROUSSELIN: Has your father — [*Turns to the* Waiter, *who is carrying out chairs*] He irritates me, that waiter! Go! leave us in peace! [*Exit* Waiter] Has your father still any adherents who would support him with their votes? He showed me a long list of names of communes —

ONÉSIME: He is absolutely certain of the votes of sixty-four labourers. I have seen their names.

ROUSSELIN [*aside*]: Not an alarming number!

ONÉSIME: But I have something to give you, Monsieur. An old woman stopped me as I was about to enter this house, and said, "Do me the favour to hand this note to Monsieur Rousselin." [*Hands a note*]

ROUSSELIN: An odd-looking letter! Let us see what it says. [*Opens and reads the note*] "A person who is interested in you believes it his duty to warn you that Madame Rousselin —" [*stops, astounded*]

ONÉSIME: Do you wish to send back any answer to that?

ROUSSELIN [*sneering*]: An answer?

ONÉSIME: Yes.

ROUSSELIN [*furiously*]: My answer would be a kick for the fool who executes such a commission! [*Exit* Onésime *hastily*] Pooh! only an anonymous letter! I am an idiot to let it disturb me!

[*Crushes the note and throws it on the floor*] Apparently, the hatred of my enemies knows no bounds. This is a dirty trick, surpassing all the others. It was written to draw my attention away from political matters; and to spoil the chances of my election, the wretches do not hesitate to attack my honour! I am sure this is some of Gruchet's work. His servant is always nosing about my place. [*Picks up letter and reads*] "Your wife has a lover." My wife has no lover! What man is there who could be her lover? What a stupid accusation! [*Pause*] I remember hearing, the other evening, out in the park, a box on the ear, followed by a kiss! And then immediately after that I saw Miss Arabella going towards the house; but surely she was not alone, for I am positive I heard a loud slap. Can it be that some insolent puppy presumed to approach my wife? Impossible! She would have told me of it. And in that case, the kiss would have come before the blow, whereas I remember distinctly that the blow came first and the kiss afterwards! Bah! I shall worry no more about it; I have other things to think of. And now to work! [*About to go. Enter* Gruchet]

Scene IV.

Gruchet: Monsieur Murel is not here, it appears.

Rousselin: You have come to mock me, I suppose, —to enjoy my chagrin, and to give me some of your sneers.

Gruchet: Not at all!

ROUSSELIN: At least, you might have used fair means, Monsieur.

GRUCHET: The right is on my side.

ROUSSELIN: Oh, I understand that in politics—

GRUCHET: It is not the love of politics that has prompted me, but a more humble interest. Monsieur Murel—

ROUSSELIN: Murel! I don't care a button for him!

GRUCHET: He has avoided me for a week, in spite of all his fine promises. He has behaved in an abominable manner. He was not content with making me a party to his revengeful actions,—I tell you, I could betray him to the authorities, but I have not done so out of respect to everyone concerned, and for the sake of his working-people.

ROUSSELIN: Say quickly whatever you have to say.

GRUCHET: When Murel came here, he was interested in speculations on the Bourse, which at the beginning were very fortunate. In fact, he did so well that—for the first time—I lent him ten thousand francs. He paid them back, to be sure, and with interest. Two months later he borrowed five thousand of me. But his luck had changed. A third time—

ROUSSELIN: I really don't see that this concerns me at all!

GRUCHET: In short, he actually owes me to-day thirty thousand two hundred and twenty-six francs and fifteen centimes!

ROUSSELIN [*aside*]: This bit of information may be useful!

GRUCHET: That young man has abused my confidence! He deluded me by saying that he had a prospect of making a rich marriage.

ROUSSELIN: The rascal!

GRUCHET: Thanks to him, I now find myself without money. For several days, following his advice, I have been spending a great deal! [*Sighs*] And since you are his friend, will you not ask him to give me back the money that belongs to me?

ROUSSELIN: You, my rival, ask me that?

GRUCHET: I have not taken an oath to remain your rival. I have a heart, Monsieur Rousselin, and I know how to appreciate kindness.

ROUSSELIN: Do you, indeed? Perhaps you remember that I hold a receipt from you for six thousand francs, lent some time ago to help you set yourself up in business, which — counting the interest — now amounts to more than twenty thousand francs.

GRUCHET: I wished to speak to you about that very matter. But I am compelled to be always giving and giving.

ROUSSELIN: I rather think that I do more of that sort of thing than anyone else!

GRUCHET: Remember how many persons I have depending upon me, and that I have — although you may not believe it — a certain amount of influence. If you would give me back that paper you just mentioned, we might come to an understanding.

ROUSSELIN: An understanding? On what point?

GRUCHET: Well, — I would — cut loose from the electors — give up my chances.

ROUSSELIN: And if I should not be elected, — then I should lose the deputyship and the money too!

GRUCHET: Oh, you are too modest!

ROUSSELIN: What do you mean by that?

GRUCHET: Have your own way, then! There would be time to change matters, even at the last moment. I tell you once more, you are making a mistake. [*Turns to the left*]

ROUSSELIN: Where are you going by that door?

GRUCHET: To a private room just outside, where I think Julien is writing out his report of the meeting. You are making a blunder, I assure you.

[*Exit*, L.

SCENE V.

ROUSSELIN: Was that a ruse or was he speaking the truth? As to Murel — he is an idiot, to allow himself to be drawn into stock speculations. I always suspected him of it. But I shall not bother my head about him; he has lost his credit with the people, and by Jove! —

MUREL [*enters joyously*]: Pardon me, my dear Rousselin, for leaving you so abruptly! I have just come from Dodart's office. What an event, my dear friend! Such a fortunate —

ROUSSELIN: Ha! You're a nice fellow! I have been obliged to receive your creditors. Gruchet demands thirty thousand francs!

MUREL: He shall have them next week!

ROUSSELIN: Still boasting, are you? You never have a doubt about anything! Not even about my election. Not everyone is as clever as you; and now I suppose you intend to —

MUREL: To support Gruchet, were you about to say?

ROUSSELIN: Yes, I was! .For a whole week now *The Impartial* has done nothing to help my cause.

MUREL: I was away on a journey, and no sooner did I arrive home than I rushed to the office.

ROUSSELIN: That's a slim excuse!

MUREL: Gruchet's demand for payment at this time is simply an act of revenge. I have ruined myself for you. But fortunately—

ROUSSELIN: What is fortunate?

MUREL: Well—you have, in a way, promised me your daughter's hand.

ROUSSELIN: Oh, listen to him!

MUREL: But you do not know that I have just fallen heir to a fortune.

ROUSSELIN: Your aunt's, perhaps!

MUREL: Precisely!

ROUSSELIN: That joke is rather stale.

MUREL: I swear to you that my aunt is dead!

ROUSSELIN: All right! Bury her, then, but don't try to fool me with your story of inheritance.

MUREL: But it is absolutely true, I tell you! Only, as the poor woman died after I left her, her executors are trying to discover whether she left any later will.

ROUSSELIN: Ah, there is a doubt! Well, for my part, I like people that are sure of what they say and do.

MUREL: Monsieur Rousselin, you forget what I am able to do for you.

ROUSSELIN: No great things, I fancy! Your own workmen won't listen to you any more.

MUREL: Indeed! You really believe that? Just because five or six brawling fellows, who I had discharged from the factory, turned against me! But there are others!

ROUSSELIN: Why didn't they come to the meeting, then?

MUREL: How could I bring them here when I was absent on a journey?

ROUSSELIN [*aside*]: That's a fine reason!

MUREL: You do not know their humour, but I will wager that between now and next Sunday, I could—but no, I will not mix myself up in any more of your affairs. I will work for Gruchet.

ROUSSELIN [*aside*]: He threatens me! I wonder whether there is still a hope! [*Aloud*] So you believe that the effect of a reunion would not be altogether bad?

MUREL: Well, I don't know. You see, you have hurt the feelings of the people.

ROUSSELIN: But I myself am one of the people! My father was a humble workman. We must impress that upon them, my good Murel! Say that I have suffered much for them, because the government has laid its hand upon me, only just now. Go back to the factory quickly and speak to them again.

MUREL: But listen—wait! I must show you the certificate of my aunt's death.

ROUSSELIN: Go! Go! Make them understand—

MUREL: First, she left a farm—

SCENE VI.

(*The same, including* Mme. Rousselin *and* Louise)

MME. R. [*to* Louise, *speaking off stage*]: Follow me, Louise! What are you looking at out there?

[*Enter* Mme. R. *and* Louise] Ah! I have found you at last! [*To* Rousselin] I was so anxious about you. If you only had a little sense!

ROUSSELIN: I could not get away before, my dear.

LOUISE [*sees* Murel]: Ah! my friend!

MUREL: Louise!

MME. R. [*scandalised*]: What does this mean? Louise, is this proper behaviour for a young girl? And you, Monsieur, why do you presume to be so familiar?

MUREL: My dear Madame, Monsieur Rousselin will explain to you —

MME. R.: I am decidedly curious to know [*draws* Rousselin *aside*] for what possible reason my daughter —

ROUSSELIN: My dear, first of all, you must understand —[*They talk aside*]

LOUISE [*to* Murel]: It was I who made mamma come. I knew you were here, and it was the only way I could manage to see you.

MUREL: We must not seem to be too much interested in each other; I will tell you later the reason why. [*Approaches* M. *and* Mme. Rousselin] Madame, although I know it is the custom to ask a friend to act as an intermediary in these matters, I am forced by circumstances to act for myself; and I beg you now to give me the hand of Mademoiselle Louise in marriage.

MME. R.: But, Monsieur, persons of our station in life do not wish —

MUREL [*hastily*]: The change in my fortunes warrants my making this request.

ROUSSELIN: We must first be fully satisfied on that point.

MME. R.: But this is entirely contrary to ordinary etiquette!

LOUISE [*smiles*]: Oh, mamma!

MME. R.: And such an unconventional proposal in a public place!—it is really—really—

SCENE VII.

JULIEN [*enters*]: I have come, Monsieur [*to* Rousselin], to place myself wholly at your disposal.

ROUSSELIN: You?

JULIEN: Yes, certainly!

MUREL [*aside*]: Who brought him here?

JULIEN: As the journal that I represent has the authority of seniority over any other publication in this part of the country, I can be of great service to you, Monsieur.

ROUSSELIN [*astonished*]: But how about Murel?

JULIEN [*looks at* Mme R.]: Through that door I heard all that passed at the meeting; and it will be perfectly easy for me to make a favourable report of it—of course [*indicates* Murel], with the permission of my chief.

ROUSSELIN: I do not know how to express my gratitude to you!

MME. R. [*aside to* Rousselin]: Now you see how successful I have been! [*Aside to* Julien] I thank you, Monsieur!

JULIEN [*aside to* Mme R.]: Your eyes have inspired me, believe it, Madame!

ROUSSELIN [*to* Mme. R.]: He is really charming! Protected by you, he is sure of a staunch supporter!

MUREL: He has wonderful talent, and a remarkably clever and picturesque style of writing!

ROUSSELIN: I can easily believe it.

MUREL: He has plenty of strength, too, when he takes the trouble to use it. [*Aside to* Julien] You will oblige me by saying that this idea was mine!

JULIEN: Well, I own, Monsieur Rousselin, that in spite of the former arguments of our friend Murel—who always praised you with the greatest enthusiasm—I was rather obstinate and hard to convince. [*Looks at* Mme. R.] But now, with the suddenness of a flash of light, I understand everything, and I will obey your wishes!

ROUSSELIN: Ah, my dear Monsieur, I am filled with gratitude!

JULIEN [*aside to* Mme. R.]: When shall we meet again?

MME. R. [*aside to* Julien]: I will send you word!

ROUSSELIN: I do not exactly know how you will succeed in winning the favour of Madame Rousselin, my dear Monsieur Duprat! [*Smiles*]

JULIEN [*gaily*]: I shall try my best to do so, I assure you, Monsieur!

ROUSSELIN [*to* Mme. R.]: Ask Monsieur Julien to dine with us this evening, quite *en famille.*

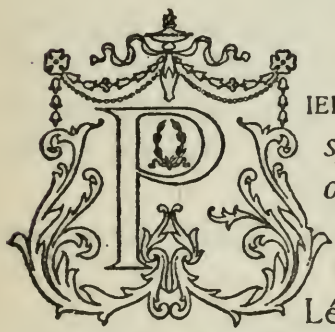
MME. R. [*curtseys low*]: Certainly, with the greatest pleasure!

JULIEN [*bows*]: Madame!

ACT IV.

Scene: Rousselin's *study. Large window at the back, showing view of the country. Several doors* R. *and* L. *A desk stands* L., *with a clock on its top shelf.*

Scene I.



IERRE [*stands at half-open door, speaking loudly to some person off the stage*]: François! see that carriages are sent at once to take eight gentlemen to Saint-Léonard, and do not close the drive-way gates. Elizabeth must open the bulletins as they arrive. Don't forget to stop at the stationer's on your way back, and bring home the visiting-cards! [*Enter a* Messenger, *who pants under a load of newspapers*] That's heavy, isn't it, my good man? Put it down there — that's right! [*The* Messenger *deposits his bundle, then goes outside the door, and returns with a much larger package, which he puts down beside the first*] Now go down to the kitchen and get something to brace you up! They are drinking champagne out of preserve-pots down there! Everything goes just now, you see! [*Exit* Mes-

senger] This is election day, and next week—Paris! How long have I dreamed of living there, and longed for it—principally on account of the oysters and the Opera Ball! [*Looks at the two bundles on the floor*] There are more copies of that article written by Monsieur Duprat! Where shall I distribute them? Every one in the town has, without exaggeration, at least three copies of it already! And here are all these extra copies on our hands! Never mind! I'll get to work on them. [*Begins to divide the papers into small parcels. Enter the* Policeman] Ah! Father Morin! You are rather late to-day.

POLICEMAN: It is because some kind of row has been going on at Monsieur Murel's house; his workmen have all turned their backs on him now! Everything is going wrong, I fear. [*Helps* Pierre *to sort papers. Enter* Félicité]

PIERRE: How are you, Félicité? Good morning, Madame Gruchet! Ha! ha!

FÉLICITÉ: You are very rude, Pierre!

PIERRE: I thought you were all off with us, since your master set himself up in opposition to mine.

FÉLICITÉ [*drily*]: That was none of *my* business, was it? I have a message for your master.

PIERRE: He has gone out.

FÉLICITÉ: Will he return for luncheon?

PIERRE: For luncheon? Do you suppose he has time for luncheon? Why, he is rushing about from morning till night! Madame carries his meals to his room when he is at home, and Mademoiselle Louise goes about distributing food to the poor!

FÉLICITÉ: And the governess?

PIERRE: Oh, she is more sentimental than ever! [*To the* Policeman] No, not that way! [*Folds a paper carefully*] Monsieur Rousselin himself showed me how to fold these journals, so that this article shall catch the eye at first glance.

POLICEMAN: He is making lively times in this district.

PIERRE: I believe you, my boy!

FÉLICITÉ: While I am waiting, may I say a word to the English lady?

PIERRE [*points to a door,* L.]: Her room is out there, down the corridor, last door at the right.

FÉLICITÉ: Oh, I know! [*Crosses to door,* L.]

PIERRE: Here comes our good master! [Félicité *slips behind the door and remains unobserved in the corner. Enter* Rousselin]

SCENE II.

ROUSSELIN [*clasps* Pierre's *hand warmly*]: My dear friend!

PIERRE [*astonished*]: Why, master!

ROUSSELIN [*recovers himself*]: Oh! Ah!—a slight absence of mind! I have become so accustomed to shaking hands with my political friends! The palm of my right hand is almost inflamed! [*To the* Policeman] Ah! very good! [*Hands him money quietly*] Thank you very much, my good friend, for your assistance. Do not be afraid to call upon me—if—if—ever you need anything!

POLICEMAN [*with a deprecating gesture*]: Oh, that's all right, Monsieur!

[*Exit, with* Pierre, *helping to carry away the bundles.*

ROUSSELIN: That newspaper article of Julien's does away with all possible objections that remained against me! It shows how absurd it was for the electors to form their opinions so hastily, and demonstrates that my conduct has been most wise and loyal! He praises my administrative ability, and even says that, should I be elected, I shall gain only what is my right! And he says it all with such style—so much elegance! Ah! I owe a great deal to the cleverness of my wife in managing this affair!

FÉLICITÉ [*comes from the corner, extending a note*]: From Monsieur Gruchet!

ROUSSELIN [*takes note, opens it and reads*]: "Send me that receipt, and I will withdraw all opposition. You may entrust it to my servant." The devil! This might be called putting a knife to a man's throat! But—if he should withdraw and make no more trouble, and I should be nominated! That's worth considering. It is a large sum, and the interest increases it all the time. If he should be elected, I could get it all back. But—six thousand francs!—not so great a sum, after all—I had almost forgotten about it. What good would they do me? A man gains nothing without some sacrifice! [*Opens writing-desk*] Wait! [*Opens drawer in desk and takes out paper; gives it to* Félicité] Take that, and hasten home! Your master is waiting for it.

FÉLICITÉ: Thank you, Monsieur! [*Exit.*

ROUSSELIN: His resignation comes rather late in the day! Pshaw! the voting is only just about to begin, and even if I should lose a few votes—

SCENE III.

(*The same, including* Murel *and* Dodart)

MUREL [*enters with* Dodart]: Now, perhaps you will believe me, Monsieur Rousselin. I have brought the notary, who will show you all the papers proving my inheritance.

DODART [*shows documents*]: Here are the legal papers, also the inventory, establishing the rights and qualities of my client as heir to the property of his aunt, Madame Murel, widow, late of Montélimart.

ROUSSELIN: I congratulate you!

MUREL: Now there will be no further opposition, I hope, to — to —

ROUSSELIN: To what, Monsieur Murel?

MUREL: Why, to my marriage!

ROUSSELIN: You cannot expect me to talk about that on such a day as this!

MUREL: Of course I know you are very much occupied. But, without saying anything decisive, you might give me a little encouragement.

ROUSSELIN: Have you heard the news? Hasn't anyone told you that Gruchet —

MUREL: Monsieur Rousselin, it seems to me you might listen to my request!

ROUSSELIN: No! no! Don't worry me now! You would do better to go and look after your workmen. Even in the short time that remains, they might —

MUREL: But I brought Dodart here expressly that he might explain my affairs to you!

ROUSSELIN: Go to your workmen now, I say! We can talk of your affairs later.

MUREL: You consent, then—it is certain?

ROUSSELIN: Yes, but don't lose any more time!

MUREL [*joyfully*]: Ah! you may count on me! Why, I ought to give them an increase in wages out of my own pocket! [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

ROUSSELIN: A good lad, that Murel!

DODART: Nevertheless, he deceives himself. The factory hands laugh at him now. As to his fortune—

(*Enter* Marchais)

MARCHAIS: Your servant, gentlemen! [*To* Rousselin] Monsieur de Bouvigny sent me here to receive your reply.

ROUSSELIN: Reply to what?

MARCHAIS: To the matter that Monsieur Dodart had just laid before you.

DODART [*slaps his own forehead*]: What a piece of thoughtlessness! The first that I have been guilty of in my career as a notary!

MARCHAIS: And he would like your answer in writing!

ROUSSELIN: But—

DODART: Let me explain. [*To* Marchais] Go out in the courtyard and wait a few moments. [*Exit* Marchais] Three days ago, Monsieur Rousselin,

the Count de Bouvigny informed me again that he still wishes to form an alliance with your family.

ROUSSELIN: I knew that well enough!

DODART: And he said that if you wish—hang it! you know one must use what means he can! They may not always be the most desirable, but—

ROUSSELIN: You have a very roundabout way of getting at this matter.

DODART: Had it not been for Murel, who rushed into my study and took up my time, I should have been here much sooner.

ROUSSELIN: Well, well! what *is* the business, for heaven's sake?

DODART: If you will allow your daughter to marry Monsieur Onésime, the Count says he is sure—positively sure, you understand—of your election, because he will send sixty-four of his own labourers to the polls to vote for you.

ROUSSELIN: This message by Marchais is a sort of final word?

DODART: Absolutely!

ROUSSELIN: Well,—but Murel?

DODART: You have just given him a promise.

ROUSSELIN: Was it really a promise?

DODART: Oh, rather!

ROUSSELIN: That is to say, not altogether! But—what do you advise me to do?

DODART: The situation is rather serious. Certain ties of friendship, and many other interests, attach me to Monsieur de Bouvigny, and I should be delighted to see an alliance made between his family and yours. On the other hand, I will not hide

from you the fact that Monsieur Murel is now—[*aside*] party to a contract! [*Aloud*] You ought to reflect, to look on all sides, to weigh every consideration. On one side, there is family, on the other, fortune! For Monsieur Murel is now a good match. However, young Onésime—

ROUSSELIN: What shall I do? Oh, my wife! I had forgotten her! I cannot do anything without consulting her. [*Rings. A pause*] Everyone is dead or asleep to-day! [*Calls*] Pierre! Pierre! [*Enter* Pierre] Say to Madame Rousselin that I wish to speak to her here.

PIERRE: Madame is not in the house, Monsieur.

ROUSSELIN: Look for her in the garden. [*Exit* Pierre] She will discover some way—she has so much tact.

DODART: In certain circumstances, I, too, consult my wife, and to do her justice—[*Re-enter* Pierre]

PIERRE: Monsieur, I cannot find Madame in the garden.

ROUSSELIN: Well, search elsewhere, then! Find her!

PIERRE: The cook thinks that Madame went out some time ago.

ROUSSELIN: Where was she going?

PIERRE: She did not say.

ROUSSELIN: Are you sure of that?

PIERRE: Quite sure, Monsieur. [*Pause. Exit* Pierre.

ROUSSELIN: This is very extraordinary! Never in her life has she—

ARABELLA [*enters hastily, with much excitement*]: Monsieur! Monsieur! I must speak to you! Hear me! It is something very important,—oh, very serious, Monsieur!

DODART: Shall I retire, Mademoiselle? [Arabella *nods*] [*Exit* Dodart.

Scene V.

Rousselin: What is the matter with you, Mademoiselle? Tell me quickly.

Arabella: Good heavens! Monsieur, pardon me if I dare—it is in your interest! Madame's absence seems very strange to you, and I believe I can—

Rousselin: Is it, by chance—

Arabella: Ah, Monsieur! by chance! Listen! Your wife is now with Monsieur Julien!

Rousselin [*stunned*]: What! [*Suddenly, after a pause*] Of course! Something to do with my election!

Arabella: I do not believe it, because I met them at the Blue Cross, and watched them; they went into the little pavilion—you know, the hunters' rendezvous—and I—I—overheard these words from Monsieur Julien—without comprehending them altogether, in spite of the explanation that Monsieur Gruchet gave me just now, seeming to understand them better than I. Monsieur Julien said: "I will go out before you, and in order to make you understand that you may come out also without fear, I will shake my handkerchief behind me!"

Roussalin: Impossible! Proofs, Miss Arabella, proofs!

Scene VI.

Dodart [*enters quickly*]: Marchais would not wait! From your summer-house in the park, he fancied he saw the Count de Bouvigny coming down the hill, surrounded by a great crowd.

ROUSSELIN: The sixty-four labourers!

DODART: The Count may make them vote for Gruchet!

ROUSSELIN: Oh, no! Gruchet has promised—but, after all—that miserable fellow—who knows what he will do?

DODART: Or the Count may make them put blank papers in the box.

ROUSSELIN: And perhaps that would be enough to spoil my chances!

DODART: But the hour is growing late!

ROUSSELIN: It will be some time before they can reach the city hall, fortunately. Tell Marchais to go to the count, and beg him to grant me at least—Where is Louise? Miss Arabella, call Louise! [*Exit* Arabella] How shall I persuade the girl?

DODART: If you think anything I can say—

ROUSSELIN: No, that might hurt her feelings. Wait here, and as soon as I have her consent—But Bouvigny demands a written reply! Can I ever—

DODART: Your word of honour will suffice. Then I will return at once to tell you—

ROUSSELIN: But you will not have time! The polls close at four o'clock! Run! Hasten!

DODART: I will go at once to the city hall.

ROUSSELIN: How I wish I could be there, so that I could know the sooner how affairs are going!

DODART: You will soon know.

ROUSSELIN: I hardly think so! You are not very quick!

DODART: If you win, I will wave my handkerchief as a signal to you. You will be able to see it from your window.

ROUSSELIN: A good idea! [*Enter* Louise]
LOUISE: Did you send for me, papa?
ROUSSELIN: Yes, my child. [*To* Dodart] Now go quickly, my dear friend!
DODART: But I must wait outside to learn Mademoiselle's decision.
ROUSSELIN: Oh, — true! [*Exit* Dodart.

SCENE VII.

ROUSSELIN: Louise, you love your father, do you not?
LOUISE: Oh, papa! what a question!
ROUSSELIN: And for him you would do —
LOUISE: Anything he wishes!
ROUSSELIN: Good! Now listen to me! It often happens that catastrophes come into the quietest lives. A perfectly honest man sometimes allows himself to be led astray by blandishments, or his own folly. Suppose, for instance — it is only a supposition, nothing more! — I had committed some reprehensible action, and that, in order to help me out of my trouble —
LOUISE: Oh, papa! You frighten me!
ROUSSELIN: Do not be alarmed, darling! The matter is not so serious as that. But, — suppose I should ask a certain sacrifice of you, would you resign yourself? I do not ask a sacrifice, however, — only a concession. It would not be difficult for you — the acquaintance has been so short. Briefly, then, my poor little girl, I ask you to think no more of Monsieur Murel!
LOUISE: But I love him!

ROUSSELIN: What! Nonsense! You have only allowed yourself to be taken with his manners and his dashing way of talking.

LOUISE: I find him very charming indeed!

ROUSSELIN: But, my child,—I cannot tell you the details, but I will just hint to you that his morals are far from good!

LOUISE: That is not true!

ROUSSELIN: Then, he is overwhelmed with debts! We shall probably see him running away from them at no very distant day!

LOUISE: But why? He is rich now.

ROUSSELIN: Ah! you are thinking of his fortune, are you? I had not spoken of it. I thought your sentiments were higher, more noble than that!

LOUISE: But I did love him for himself, from the very first day I saw him!

ROUSSELIN: And you cherish your own little interests, too,—own up to it! You do not disdain little frivolities and pretty things; you like titles; and you would be very happy in Paris—after I become deputy—to take your place in fashionable society; to be invited to the houses of the Faubourg Saint-Germain. Wouldn't you like to be a countess?

LOUISE: A countess—I?

ROUSSELIN: Yes,—by marrying Onésime!

LOUISE: Never—so long as I live! Marry an idiot who does nothing but gaze at the tips of his boots—who hasn't brains enough to get an engagement as *valet de chambre!* He is incapable of speaking two sensible words! And what charming sisters-in-law I should have! They don't know how to spell! And a pretty father-

in-law — who looks like a farmer! And such pride and arrogance, and such a style of dressing themselves! Why, they wear gloves made of floss silk!

ROUSSELIN: You are very unjust. Onésime has been much better educated than you think. He was brought up under the tutorship of an eminent churchman; and the family dates from the twelfth century. You can see their genealogical tree in the grand hall of the castle. The ladies — they are not models of fashion, it is true, but what of that? And as for the Count de Bouvigny — there is no more loyal friend —

LOUISE: But you have been very bitter against him since you became a candidate, and the Count has shown just as great an enmity towards you! He is not like Murel, who has stood by you faithfully. And he stands by you still! Yet you ask me to forget him! I do not understand all this. What does it mean?

ROUSSELIN: I cannot explain it to you, my child, but surely you do not think I wish to make you unhappy. You do not doubt my tenderness, my judgment, my good sense? I know the world well. I know what is best for you. You would never be compelled to leave us — we should always be together. Nothing would be changed. I entreat you, my dear Louise — try to please me!

LOUISE: Ah, you torture me!

ROUSSELIN: I do not command — I supplicate you! [*Kneels*] Save me!

LOUISE [*her hand on her heart*]: No! I cannot!

ROUSSELIN [*despairingly*]: You will be compelled to reproach yourself for having killed your father!

LOUISE [*starts up*]: Ah, my God! Do what you will, then! [*Exit.*

ROUSSELIN [*runs to door, up stage; opens it and speaks loudly*]: Dodart! Give the Count my word of honour! Quick! [*Comes down C.*] That was a painful scene! Poor little girl! But, after all, why shouldn't she love Onésime just as well as Murel? He is as good as any one else. And he will be much easier to manage than Murel! No, I have not done badly; everyone will be pleased, particularly my wife. [*Starts*] My wife! Ah! That serpent of an Arabella, with her lies and insinuations! In spite of myself, I— [*Enter* Voinchet] What! Do you not intend to vote?

SCENE VIII.

VOINCHET: Yes, immediately. There are fifteen of us from Bonneval; the others are waiting for me in the Café Français, and we shall all go to the city hall together.

ROUSSELIN [*very graciously*]: And how can I be of service to you, Monsieur?

VOINCHET: One of the engineers of the new railway has just told me that the road will certainly be laid by way of Saint-Mathieu, although at first, it was thought that it would run through Bonneval. Considering that probability, I had bought a piece of ground, and, in order to be able to claim a larger indemnity, I had even started a nursery upon it! So now I find myself very much embarrassed. I wish to change my business, but

how shall I dispose of about five hundred bergamot pear-trees, eight hundred peach-trees, three hundred Emperors of China, and more than a hundred and sixty pigeons?

ROUSSELIN: I do not see that I can do anything to help you in the matter.

VOINCHET: Pardon me! You have at the rear end of your park an excellent soil for raising fruit-trees —fine and rich!—and at the rate of thirty sous apiece, I will gladly turn over to you all my shrubs!

ROUSSELIN [*walks towards the door with* Voinchet]: Well, well! I will decide about it later.

VOINCHET: You will take them, of course? You shall receive the first load to-morrow. Now I will go to join my friends! [*Exit.*

HOMBOURG [*enters,* L.]: I have only come to say, Monsieur, that you must take my—

ROUSSELIN: But I have your chestnut horses already, man! They have been in my stable three days!

HOMBOURG: And that's the right place for them! But listen—for rough cartage and heavy work, Monsieur de Bouvigny (oh! you will beat that man, without fail!) has refused to buy from me a fine, strong mare, and the price was a mere trifle—only forty pistoles!

ROUSSELIN: And do you wish me to buy it?

HOMBOURG: That would give me a great deal of pleasure, Monsieur!

ROUSSELIN: Very well, I will take it.

HOMBOURG: Excuse me, Monsieur Rousselin, but—is it too much to ask—a small sum on account—for the chestnuts, you know? The remainder at your leisure, of course!

ROUSSELIN: Oh, certainly! [*Goes to desk and opens drawer*] How are things going at the city hall?

HOMBOURG: All goes well.

ROUSSELIN: Have you been there?

HOMBOURG: Yes, indeed.

ROUSSELIN [*aside, pushes back the drawer*]: There is no great hurry!

HOMBOURG [*sees* Rousselin's *movement*]: That is to say, I went there, of course, to get my ballot. I have now just time to go and vote. [Rousselin *opens drawer and hands money to* Hombourg] Thanks for your kindness! [*About to go*] You ought to cut a dash, Monsieur Rousselin! Now, there is that pretty little Normandy nag I told you about —

ROUSSELIN: Oh, enough! Enough!

HOMBOURG: If it were freshened up a bit and well groomed, it would make a fine pony for Mademoiselle!

ROUSSELIN [*aside*]: Poor Louise!

HOMBOURG: It would be a pleasant distraction for her.

ROUSSELIN [*sighs*]: Well, I will take the pony!

[*Exit* Hombourg.

BEAUMESNIL [*standing at threshold of door,* R.]: Only two words with you, Monsieur! I have brought my son to you!

ROUSSELIN: And why have you done that?

BEAUMESNIL: He is out in the courtyard now, playing with the dog. Will you see him? It is he of whom I spoke to you regarding his education. We hope for a little help from you.

ROUSSELIN: I will do what I can, certainly.

BEAUMESNIL: These children cost so much! And I have seven, Monsieur, all as strong as young Turks!

ROUSSELIN [*aside*]: That's encouraging!

BEAUMESNIL: His schoolmaster has sent me a bill for two quarters, and though it humiliates me to ask you,—still, if you could advance me the money—

ROUSSELIN [*opens drawer of the desk*]: How much is it a quarter?

BEAUMESNIL [*shows a long bill*]: There are some extras besides. [Rousselin *gives him money*] I will run home and tell the good news! Frankly, I came here on purpose to see you!

ROUSSELIN: What! did you not come to vote? How about my election?

BEAUMESNIL: I thought that was to come off to-morrow! I live so quietly at home, Monsieur, in my own little circle! But I will go at once and do my duty—at once, Monsieur! [*Exit.*

LEDRU [*enters,* C.]: Ah, famous! You are as good as elected!

ROUSSELIN [*joyfully*]: Ah!

LEDRU: Gruchet has withdrawn. Everyone has known it for the last two hours. He was right—it was the prudent thing for him to do. To tell the truth, I helped to spoil his chances, and you ought to recognise my friendly services by trying to obtain for me—[*Shows the buttonhole of his coat*]

ROUSSELIN [*speaks low*]: The ribbon!

LEDRU [*loudly*]: If I did not deserve it I would not ask for it, but—You appear very cold, Monsieur Rousselin!

ROUSSELIN: But, my dear friend, how can I do this for you? I am not yet a minister!

LEDRU: Oh, well! never mind! Only—I have behind me twenty-five men—good, lively fellows,

Heurtelot at the head of them, with some of Murel's mill-hands — and they are waiting for me at the market. I told them I was coming here to make you a proposition, and they will wait until I tell them how it was received. Now, I warn you, if you don't swear that you will try to obtain for me the cross of honour —

ROUSSELIN: Oh, very well! I will try! And I will buy a few foreign orders also for you!

LEDRU: All in good time! [*Exit quickly.*

SCENE IX.

ROUSSELIN [*looks out of wide window at the back of stage*]: He will have just time — there are still five minutes! In five minutes the polls will close, and then! — I do not dream! It is true! A brilliant future opens before me! Oh, to take my place among distinguished men! To call myself a member of some committee; to be chosen sometimes to make a report, to talk of budgets, amendments, sub-amendments; and to take part in many affairs, all of the greatest importance! Every morning I shall see my name printed in the journals, even in those of which I do not know the language!

The theatres! the hunt! the women! Isn't all that well worth having? [*Pause*] But, in order to obtain it, I am compelled to give my money, my own flesh and blood — everything! Yes, I have sacrificed my daughter — my poor daughter! [*Weeps*] I feel the deepest remorse, and I do not

even know whether Bouvigny will keep his word. One does not sign votes. [*The clock strikes four*] Four o'clock! It is all over! They will count the vote at once — that will not take long. How shall I pass the time until I hear the result? Some intimate friend — even if it were only Murel — ought to come here soon, to give me the first news.

Oh, men! men! One may ruin himself for them without finding any gratitude! If they do not elect me — Ah, well! so much the worse for them! Where can they find another candidate like me? I should do my duty! [*Stamps his foot*] Oh, come! hasten, some one! They are all against me, the wretches! This is killing me! My head reels! I don't know what I am about! If this suspense keeps on, I shall smash the furniture!

Scene X.

(*Enter a* Beggar, *pretending to be blind*)

Rousselin: This is not an elector! Why didn't some one hustle him off the premises? Who allowed you to enter my doors?

Beggar: The house was open, and some one told me I should find in here a man who was kind to everyone — the good Monsieur Rousselin! No one talks of anything but you, Monsieur. Give me something, — it will bring you good luck!

Rousselin [*speaks to himself*]: It will bring me good luck! [*Puts two fingers in his waistcoat pocket;*

pauses; reflects] They say that alms given in critical circumstances possess a power for bringing good fortune that no one can explain. I ought to have gone to church this morning—

BEGGAR [*whines*]: Charity, if you please!

ROUSSELIN [*feels in all his pockets*]: I have no more money about me.

BEGGAR [*whines*]: Something, Monsieur!

ROUSSELIN [*rummages in the drawers of his desk*]: No, not a sou! I have been giving away money all day long! This creature annoys me! Ah, I shall soon find that money flies!

BEGGAR: Charity, if you please! You, who are so rich! I want bread! Ah, how weak I am! [*Appears about to fall; leans against the door*]

ROUSSELIN [*discouraged*]: I cannot beat a blind man!

BEGGAR: Only the least thing—and I will pray to the good God for you!

ROUSSELIN [*tears his watch from its pocket and hands it to the* Beggar]: There! take that! and heaven will, without doubt, have pity on *me!* [*Exit* Beggar *quickly.* Rousselin *looks at the clock*] No one has come yet! Something bad has happened, and no one dares to tell me! I would go myself, but my legs—ah! it is too much! Everything seems to turn around! I am about to faint! [*Sinks on a couch near the window*]

SCENE XI.

ARABELLA [*enters softly, and touches* Rousselin *on the shoulder*]: Look! [*Points out of the win-*

dow; Rousselin *leans over to follow the direction of her finger*] Just below the road—in front of the schoolhouse—on the top of the hedge—do you see?

ROUSSELIN: I see something white waving over the hedge.

ARABELLA: The handkerchief!

ROUSSELIN: But I do not understand—[*Suddenly cries*] Ah! how stupid of me! [*Springs up*] It is Dodart waving his handkerchief! Victory! Victory! Yes, my good Arabella, it is certain! Look! some one is running this way!

ARABELLA [*leans out of the window*]: A crowd is coming through the gates—men with guns! [*Gun-shots heard*]

ROUSSELIN: That is to celebrate my victory! Good! [*A shot*] Again! Keep it up! Pif! Paf! [*Silence*] Listen to that! [*Steps heard running rapidly. Enter* Gruchet. Rousselin *rushes at him*] Gruchet! What is it? Speak! Am I elected? Is it done?

GRUCHET [*looks at* Rousselin *from head to foot; then bursts into rude laughter*] I think there's no doubt whatever about that, Monsieur!

(*Enter a great crowd from all sides, shouting*):

Our deputy! Long live our deputy!

[CURTAIN]

THE CASTLE OF HEARTS

A COMEDY OF FAIRYLAND

IN TEN TABLEAUX

BY

GUSTAVE FLAUBERT

SIMON P. MAGEE
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THE CASTLE OF HEARTS

This play never was produced on any stage. Gustave Flaubert worked upon it for some time in collaboration with his friends, Louis Bouilhet and Charles d'Osmoy, but several years later he entirely recast and rewrote it. He did not decide to publish it until a few months before his death. After Flaubert's revisions had been made, it appeared in a review, *La Vie Moderne*, with the names of the three collaborators, in the same form in which it is presented here.

Flaubert had a share in still another dramatic work, *The Weak Sex*, by Louis Bouilhet, the manuscript of which he discovered among the papers of Bouilhet after the death of that author.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

PAUL DE DAMVILLIERS
ALFRED DE CISY
MONSIEUR KLOEKHER
DOCTOR COLOMBEL
MONSIEUR LETOURNEUX
ONÉSIME DUBOIS
MONSIEUR BOUVIGNARD
FATHER THOMAS
DOMINIQUE
INNKEEPER
KING OF THE GNOMES

MADAME KLOEKHER
MOTHER THOMAS
JEANNE
QUEEN OF THE FAIRIES

Ladies, Gentlemen, Servants; Gnomes and Fairies (in various disguises.)

THE CASTLE OF HEARTS

IN TEN TABLEAUX

FIRST TABLEAU

THE FAIRIES' PERIL.

Scene: *A cleared spot in a forest, by moonlight. Trees and shrubs here and there can be distinguished, with white figures dimly seen gliding among them. At the back of the stage, a little to the right, is a small pool. After the curtain rises there is a brief silence, then a sound of pattering footsteps is heard.*

SCENE I.

(*From the rear and from both sides of the stage groups of* Fairies *enter, each holding a finger to her lips. Some are crowned with field-flowers; others with sea-weed and mosses; a few with gladioli and ears of corn. All represent in their costumes some attribute of the places whence they come—the woods, the streams, the mountains.*

They advance, looking over their shoulders as if fearing something, and call to one another in whispers):

IRST FAIRY: Pstt! pstt!

SECOND FAIRY: Here I am!

THIRD FAIRY: Wait for me; my foot is caught in a ray of light. I must get it out. [*Springs up*] There! it is out. Here I am.

FOURTH FAIRY: Are we all here?

ALL: Yes, we are all here!

FIFTH FAIRY: It is night; the earth sleeps. It is the hour that belongs to us. Come, let us dance and make merry.

(*Enormous moths with luminous wings appear among the branches of the trees, and begin to fly through the air. The* Fairies *dance, with a slow, rhythmic movement, to the music of a flute*)

CHORUS: Since man drives us from his dwelling by day, let us play by night in the forest!

Men are wicked, but nature is good. The stones of the street are hard, but the grassy fields are soft!

We will soil our feet no more in the mud of the street, we will break our hearts no more against men's stony breasts.

A draught of euphorbia is less treacherous than their caresses; the withered leaf, blown by the autumn wind, is more constant than their vows.

Enough of weariness! All the worse for men! Free from all human cares, we shall be always happy!

We shall never leave our native haunts, the freedom of the air, the streams, and the forest.

Let us dance along the vines that cling to the trees, wet with the dews of the summer night; let us glide over the surface of the blue lakes, clinging to the fair shoulder of a pretty maid; let us fly towards the sun in the glittering dust of the rays that come through the cellar windows. Come! let us be gay! let us dance! Roses, shake your sweet petals! Waves, murmur your soft melody! Moon, rise and smile upon us!

(*During the* Chorus *the moon has risen. At the end of the* Chorus, *it shines upon the pool and the* Fairies *dance with ecstatic fervour, when suddenly, from the midst of a large cluster of heather, in the centre of the stage, the* Fairy Queen *springs out. General surprise. The* Fairies *stop dancing*)

ALL: The Queen!

SCENE II.

(*The* Queen, *the* Fairies)

QUEEN [*in an angry tone*]: What! Is this the way that you care for men?

FAIRIES [*together*]: We can do nothing for them! We have all tried!

QUEEN [*vehemently*]: Remember! only a few minutes must elapse before we fall again, for a thousand years, under the domination of the Gnomes, since

this is the last night that remains to us in which to restore to mankind their stolen hearts.

A FAIRY: But they do not complain of the lack of hearts, O Queen. No man, up to this moment, has asked for the return of his heart. On the contrary, there are many parents, who teach their little ones—

QUEEN: What matter? Do you not know that the Gnomes cannot exist without the hearts of men? It is to nourish themselves that they steal these hearts, putting in their places [*points to her breast*] I know not what contrivance of their own invention, which imitates perfectly the movement of the human organ.

A FAIRY [*laughs*]: Truly, they deceive them well!

QUEEN: And the poor human beings allow the exchange to be made without repugnance. Some of them even find pleasure in it. Little by little, by mutual accord, the wicked Gnomes draw men's hearts away from them; and this is the reason why the whole human race—or almost the whole of it—has no kind sentiments nor generous thoughts!

A FAIRY: And you wish that we should vanquish the Gnomes?

QUEEN: Yes! Take up the battle again! A superior order of beings has divided between them and you the empire of the world. In former times we have been able to vanquish them, but for a thousand years they have been triumphant. Mankind, under their tyranny, has abandoned itself to material things; the spirit of the Gnomes has passed into the very marrow of their bones; it envelops them, prevents them from recognising

us, and, like a fog, hides from them the splendour of truth, the sun of the ideal!

A Fairy: The Gnomes can do nothing to injure us, however.

Queen: But in proportion to the increase of their power, your own becomes less. They laugh at our hopes, they foil our attempts at consolation, they even deny our existence; and after they have conquered the whole world, they will covet purer regions. Then they will throw themselves upon you with a force strengthened a thousandfold; and your hearts, like those of the unfortunate humans, will be devoured! [Fairies *utter a cry of fear*] But reassure yourselves! listen to me! [Fairies *gather around the* Queen] In order to save the human race first, and yourselves afterwards, you must attack the power of your enemies in their most secret retreat,—that is to say, in the hitherto inaccessible place where they hold in reserve the hearts of men—

Fairies [*tumultuously*]: Let us go there!

Queen: Wait! The enterprise cannot succeed except through the perfect union of two lovers.

Fairies: Oh, it is not difficult to find lovers, and as to the number—

Queen: I mean two lovers of an ardour and a purity more than human, either of whom would be willing to die for the other, without even the hope of having the loved one left behind shed a tear upon the tomb of the one that dies.

Fairies [*loudly*]: Oh! oh! And where can such lovers be found?

Queen: I do not know. They may be here quite near us, or at the other end of the earth; wear-

ing rags and tatters, or seated upon a throne. Search everywhere,—in cities, in deserts, in forests, by the sea-shore and on mountain summits. Neglect nothing! go! [*Sound of footsteps heard*] Some one comes; let us conceal ourselves! Mortal eyes must not behold us!

(*The sun begins to rise, and at the right a cabin can be seen through the fog, standing under the shade of a large tree. As the sound of footsteps comes nearer, the* Fairies *disappear; some rush into the trunks of neighbouring trees; others plunge into the pool; others vanish in the rapidly clearing fog*)

Scene III.

(Father Thomas, Mother Thomas, *peasants living in a suburb of Paris;* Dominique, *their son, wearing a shabby livery;* Monsieur Paul de Damvilliers, *in a worn travelling costume, with a band of crape on his hat. He seems overcome with melancholy*)

Father T.: Have courage, my dear Monsieur Paul.

Mother T.: You know you must start soon for Paris, and should not neglect your business affairs. Why, it is only a few leagues away,—not such a terrible distance!

Paul: Yes! I will be strong! I will go at once.

Father T.: Oh, there is no such great haste!

Mother T. [*aside to* Father T.]: Imbecile! Shut up!

Paul: Thank you, my good friends, but I cannot trespass longer upon your hospitality.

FATHER T. [*aside to* Mother T.]: There, you see he understands the situation perfectly!

DOMINIQUE: Our hospitality was scarcely worthy of you, Monsieur, and I am surprised that you condescended to accept it. Since that rascally former steward of yours had not the decency or the courtesy to offer you an apartment in the castle, it was hardly worth while to come here only to listen to a string of his cursed accounts. I am sure, Monsieur, that you have been unhappy for some time.

PAUL [*in a reverie*]: Yes! All that has happened seems like the result of a conjurer's magic; like the wrath of an implacable Fate: the sudden death of my father, the old debts that came to light, followed by my total ruin, without my being able to discover the cause or to accuse anyone.

DOMINIQUE [*affected*]: What bad luck! We used to lead such a happy life together, travelling about.

PAUL: Calm yourself, my good Dominique, and speak no more of that time, so recent and yet so remote, when we journeyed only for pleasure through the Indies and the Orient. Let us have no more regrets! I must start afresh in the world to seek my fortune. [*Appears lost in thought*]

FATHER T.: The difficulty will be to catch it!

PAUL: It can be done, however,—with courage! [*Turns to* Dominique] And then, *you* have not abandoned me.

DOMINIQUE: No, no! I have the utmost confidence in you, Monsieur; I have seen you work. Wouldn't it be a fine thing if we had at our command some of those good genii that interested you so much when we were in the East?

You remember, you consulted magicians who wore robes of all colours—green, yellow, blue—to say nothing of those who wore no shirts! And really, to look at you then, one would have thought you believed their idle tales.

PAUL: Perhaps I did. Why not? But I have delayed here too long. Adieu!

SCENE IV.

(*Enter* Jeanne)

MOTHER T.: What are you doing here, lazy girl?

PAUL [*shocked*]: Oh, how harsh you are!

MOTHER T.: And do you try to take her part against me, Monsieur Paul? Well, you were right just now—you'd better go away at once. She has talked quite enough about you while you were abroad on your travels.

PAUL: What, little one, you did not forget me? You thought of me?

MOTHER T.: Thought of you, good heavens! For five years she has been continually talking about you. "Where is he? When will he come home?" She would ask for news of you from all the passing wagoners, and when the wind blew hard, she trembled for the safety of your ship.

FATHER T. [*tries to drive* Jeanne *away*]: Get along with you! This is none of your business. Go to your work!

PAUL [*to* Jeanne]: How you have grown! You have

become quite a pretty girl. Will you allow me to kiss you? [Jeanne *hangs her head*]

DOMINIQUE: Come here, simpleton!

JEANNE [*presents her forehead timidly; speaks in an agitated tone*]: Are you going away?

PAUL: Yes, little one. I must. [*Kisses her forehead*]

JEANNE [*approaches* Dominique]: Good-bye, brother! [*Turns to* Father *and* Mother T.] He is going with Monsieur. He promised me he would go.

MOTHER T. [*aside to* Dominique]: And do you wish to go with him, now that he is ruined?

DOMINIQUE [*aside*]: Oh, we'll wait for some inheritance to turn up! And besides —

MOTHER T. [*aside*]: Well, I warn you, be careful!

DOMINIQUE [*aside*]: Besides, I say, I can come back again, if he does not succeed. Every one will be sure to speak of me as a model servitor, and that will sound very well! And if there should be a word or two about me in the newspapers — the sporting papers especially — so much the better. I have friends among the journalists!

FATHER T.: Well, at least, you will send us, from time to time —

DOMINIQUE: Impossible! my capital is — or will be — engaged. We know certain persons connected with the Bourse!

MOTHER T. [*admiringly*]: What a dashing fellow he is!

DOMINIQUE: But as soon as I obtain a responsible place —

FATHER T. [*smilingly*]: Ah!

DOMINIQUE: I will let you know!

MOTHER T.: Well, take good care of yourself, at least.

DOMINIQUE: Never fear! Myself before all! That's one of my principles.

FATHER T.: And don't spend all your money in buying furbelows.

DOMINIQUE: Nonsense! I don't do that sort of thing any more. You may be sure I know too much for that.

MOTHER T.: Isn't he a clever boy?

DOMINIQUE: And now, old folks, good-night! Good appetite to you, and good health! You first. [*Embraces his father*] Now you. [*Embraces his mother*] That's done! Now let us be off!

PAUL: You see! In spite of my misfortune and distress he wishes to accompany me.

DOMINIQUE: So long as you are willing, I am content. You could not get along without a valet, you know—it wouldn't be decent! I will have my livery turned and freshened up, put a new band on my hat, and we shall cut a great figure. Monsieur, at your service!

JEANNE [*throws her arms around* Dominique's *neck*]: Oh, my dear, good brother!

FATHER T. [*to* Dominique]: Be careful!

DOMINIQUE: Yes! yes!

MOTHER T.: Listen to me!

DOMINIQUE: Don't worry on my account. [*Moves away*]

FATHER T.: Come back to us again.

DOMINIQUE: Oh, we shall see each other, never fear.

MOTHER T.: My poor boy!

DOMINIQUE [*runs off*]: I will write to you.

PAUL [*to* Father *and* Mother T.]: I cannot prevent him from going. Farewell! farewell! Be comforted! We go to make our fortunes! [*Exit.*

Scene V.

Father T. [*in a reverie*]: To make their fortunes! To become a gentleman, sleek and well-fed; to own property, fields, woods, a mill; to put on a bold face to everyone—ah, that would be fine!

Mother T.: That it would! [*To* Jeanne] As for you, you can get out and go to digging, instead of spending hours staring at the sky.

Jeanne: But ever since daylight—

Mother T.: Bah! I've had enough of your laziness!

Father T.: Listen! I have an idea.

Mother T.: Well, has it anything to do with us?

Father T.: Perhaps. Suppose we send Jeanne to Paris?

Jeanne: Send me to Paris—all alone—in the great city! Oh!

Mother T.: Bless me! More than one girl has gone away from here in wooden shoes, and has come back wearing fine clothes. Who knows? [*Looks sharply at* Jeanne] She's not so ugly, after all. [*Pause*] Well, why not? I have decided. You shall start to-morrow morning.

Jeanne: Oh, I beg you—

Mother T.: We shall spare nothing to start you off well. Your father and I know how to make sacrifices, don't we, Thomas? First, you shall have my red cape, and with one of my old caps to go with it, you will look very well. You see, my Jeannette, you must learn how to use a little

coquetry, but in the right way—so as to make the grass grow, you understand!—and so that you can help take care of your parents, your good, kind parents!

JEANNE: But what will become of me all alone in Paris? I shall not know how to find my way about in the streets.

MOTHER T.: Pshaw! There are plenty of people who will be kind enough to show you the way.

JEANNE: But I don't know any one there.

MOTHER T.: Isn't Dominique there? And he has many fine acquaintances—bankers, military men, all the government people.

JEANNE: No, no! I should never dare to go.

MOTHER T.: To say nothing of Monsieur Paul, who would be delighted to see you.

JEANNE: He! Delighted to see a poor girl like me!

FATHER T.: But, you little idiot—

MOTHER T. [*aside*]: Shut up, will you! You don't know how to manage her! [*To* Jeanne] Take your choice: Paris, and my beautiful gold buckle, or stay at home and [*makes gesture signifying a box on the ear*]

JEANNE [*resigned*]: Very well! I will go.

MOTHER T.: That's right! But you needn't think you've nothing to do to-day but fold your hands. Go back to your work, and be quick about it.

JEANNE: At once.

FATHER T.: Come this way.

MOTHER T.: No, go that way.

JEANNE [*bewildered*]: I don't know where you wish me to go!

MOTHER T. [*gives* Jeanne *a slap*]: There, that'll show you! [Jeanne *weeps*]

FATHER T.: That's right! Whine, cry, bawl! [*Exeunt*, Father *and* Mother T. *pushing* Jeanne *before them*]

SCENE VI.

(*The* Fairies *run lightly upon the stage*)

A FAIRY: Ah, the cruel old man! Happily, the young are more kind and gentle, and among them we have discovered two pure hearts.

A FAIRY: That is true. But how will the youth ever learn to care for a little maid so simple, so poor, so ragged?

QUEEN: To us is given the work of creating this love, and our fate depends upon our efforts. But how shall we give the key of the secret to only one of these two hearts? Hasten, my sisters! Let us decide. Which shall it be?

FAIRIES [*together*, *confusedly*]: He! She! No, no! She! He! He! She!

QUEEN: Silence! It shall be the youth, because Jeanne has her ignorance and her humble condition as a safeguard. Paul, on the contrary, is exposed every day to all the snares of the wicked Gnomes. It is he we should warn, at the proper time, and do our utmost to protect within the limit permitted to us. [*Moves about among the* Fairies, *giving them instructions; then all sing*]:

Sisters fair, be prudent,
Our plan shall then succeed!

GNOMES [*their voices come from under the stage*]: Ha! ha! ha!

FAIRIES [*pause suddenly*]: What was that? An echo, without doubt. [*All sing.*]

Sisters dear, be prudent,
Our plan shall then succeed!

(*The subterranean laughter increases to a burst of wild gaiety. Through a trap-door appears a throng of* Gnomes, *strange and ugly little men, with enormous heads. They laugh louder and dance around the* Fairies, *who flee from them in terror*)

SECOND TABLEAU.

THE MAGIC PUNCH-BOWL.

Scene: *A wine shop in a suburb of Paris. Early morning.*

SCENE I.

(*The* Innkeeper; Paul *and* Dominique, *weary and covered with dust, sit beside a table, on which stand a bottle of wine, two glasses, an inkstand and a packet of sealed letters. Several farmers are just leaving the room*)

FARMERS: Good-bye, Father Michel!

INNKEEPER: Good luck, boys! [*To* Paul *and* Dominique.] And now, as you are served, gentlemen, and as it is still very early in the morning, you will excuse me if I leave you for awhile and try to catch another little nap. [*Goes behind the counter, mounts a low platform and sits in a chair, leans his head on his arms and falls asleep*]

PAUL [*shows the packet of letters to* Dominique]: You understand? As soon as we arrive in Paris, you are to distribute these letters.

DOMINIQUE [*takes packet*]: I understand. [*Reads the superscriptions*] "To Monsieur the Vicomte Alfred de Cisy." Good! There's a man whose debts you have often paid for him. But what is his address?

PAUL: You must inquire at his club.

DOMINIQUE [*reads*]: "To Monsieur Onésime Dubois, artist, Rue de l'Abbaye." Many a time have you bought bad pictures of him! [*Reads*] "To Professor Letourneux, member of several religious and philanthropic societies." I know him! It was your father who introduced him everywhere in Paris. [*Reads*] "To Doctor Colombel."

PAUL: He was our family physician, you remember.

DOMINIQUE [*reads*]: "To Monsieur Bou—Bou—Bouvignard."

PAUL: Yes, the amateur collector of faïence.

DOMINIQUE: To be sure! That little man who always dropped in at breakfast time—I remember! [*Reads*] "To Monsieur Macaret, at his factory." Ha! that gentleman was very glad to be accommodated with the loan of a certain sum when he wanted to set himself up in business! [*Shuffles the letters through his hands, muttering*] Very well, very well! I know all those streets; I have been there. How many friends you have! Peers of France, bankers, professors, artists—all Paris!

PAUL [*sighs*]: After my five years' absence perhaps they have forgotten me. But there are some good fellows, I know, that will remember me. Here! [*Points to letters*] Divide them into two packets. Deliver these first, then the others.

INNKEEPER [*suddenly awakes and falls off his chair*]: Coming, gentlemen!

CLARE VICTOR DWIGGINS 04

DOMINIQUE: No one called you.

INNKEEPER [*yawns*]: A-h-h-h! [*Returns to his chair and sleeps*]

PAUL: Note especially any signs of apartments to let, and engage for me a small room that will not be too dear.

DOMINIQUE: Is it important which floor it may be on, Monsieur?

PAUL: No. I do not care.

INNKEEPER [*awakes and falls off his chair again*]: Coming! coming!

DOMINIQUE [*jumps up startled*]: Our host has very busy dreams, evidently! [*Sits*] Oh, it's good to rest a bit! My knees feel as if they were broken and my head seems hollow.

PAUL [*stands*]: That is because we walked all night. Poor boy! Come, finish the bottle. [Dominique *drinks*] Drink to me, too, for my heart almost fails me. Just as I am about to enter upon a new life, I feel a vague trouble in my mind; it is as powerful as the malady that overcomes us when we set out on a long voyage. Come, let us go. Get up!

SCENE II.

(*A* Stranger *enters very quietly; he wears the long frock-coat of a prosperous bourgeois, and a cap with the brim turned up. He wears a beard also, and carries a stick with a leather thong. Sits at one of the tables, observing* Paul *and* Dominique *with flaming eyes. Rain is heard falling without*)

DOMINIQUE: There! it rains! We shall have to wait here now, since our equipage has not arrived in time to take us to Paris.

PAUL: Do you remember that the last time we drove together we were in a post-chaise with four horses?

DOMINIQUE: Yes, and I was on the box; I paid the postilions! And to-day we have to wait for an omnibus!

STRANGER [*rises, with a polite salutation*]: The omnibus from the suburbs does not start until half-past eight every morning, Monsieur. [Paul *and* Dominique *turn and look at the* Stranger] You are strangers, gentlemen, I think. Monsieur is travelling for pleasure, undoubtedly. If you require anyone to show you about the city, I could recommend to you some of my relatives. [Paul *and* Dominique *continue to look at him without speaking*] B-r-r-r! [*Shivers*] How cold it is! I should be glad to have something hot to drink. Hey, garçon! Bring me some punch! [Innkeeper *springs up clumsily, as before, and exit* R. *The* Stranger *calls after him*] Plenty of sugar, lemon, and cognac, and be quick about it! If you gentlemen would do me the honour to join me—

(*Enter* Maid-servant *carrying a bowl*)

DOMINIQUE: With pleasure, Monsieur,—you are too kind! [*The* Maid *has scarcely placed the bowl upon the table when a small flame springs up from its interior*] But there was nothing in that bowl a moment ago! That's very queer! [*To the* Stranger] Aha! tell me, Monsieur, didn't you

have it in your pocket all the time? You are a conjurer, a magician. This is great sport! Here's a chap that comes to an inn with ready-made punch in his pocket!

STRANGER: I do not understand a word you are saying, my dear fellow. [*Gives money to* Maid] Go and get me some cigars from the little shop in the second street from here; turn to the right as you enter the door and get them from the third shelf. I have a favourite box there, and the people of the shop know me. [*Exit* Maid] Now, Monsieur, to your good health!

(Paul *has reseated himself; leans on his elbow, deep in thought*)

STRANGER [*points to the punch-bowl*]: Well, Monsieur, is it because I have not the pleasure of your acquaintance that you will not drink?

DOMINIQUE [*conciliatingly*]: You see, my poor master is troubled; it is not that he is too proud—

PAUL [*starts up*]: No! Heaven knows I have nothing to boast of now! [*Crosses to table where* Dominique *and the* Stranger *sit and sits beside them*]

STRANGER: And so you have come to seek your fortune in the great city?

PAUL: Who told you that?

STRANGER: You yourself, Monsieur.

PAUL: In what way?

STRANGER: Just now, when you were speaking to your servant.

PAUL: Well, really, it seems to me—

STRANGER: Pardon me, Monsieur, but—I know all! And as it is my business to keep a kind of bureau

of general information, and to seek for customers in all classes of society, I thought it might be to my interest if I offered my services to you.

DOMINIQUE: You're refreshingly frank, at any rate!

STRANGER: Possibly Monsieur purposes to seek some employment under government?

PAUL [*roughly*]: No!

STRANGER: Or to interest himself in finance, diplomacy, or in railways?

PAUL: How do I know what I shall do?

STRANGER: In commerce, perhaps, or in art.

DOMINIQUE: That's it! My master is one of those men that can paint a picture in two hours, as large as that! [*Makes gesture*]

STRANGER [*bows ironically*]: Ah, Monsieur is an artist? And he expects to make his fortune! Let us respect his ambition!

PAUL [*irritated*]: Well, why not? When I think of the wretched daubers that are admired and applauded, the devil is in it if I cannot do as well! Besides, I have had the advantage of much study; and if I use all the skill I possess, I shall certainly win fame and perhaps wealth.

STRANGER: Very good, young man! But I hope you will not neglect the many things that are necessary to do in order to make your way as an artist. Steal some ideas from the old masters; disparage the moderns; exalt petty geniuses and show a sovereign contempt for great ones. That must be your first pose. Then you must paint shopkeepers as military heroes, on splendid chargers, and ladies of easy morals as Venus, engaged in the performance of some virtuous deed! Don't trouble about accurate drawing or colour,—they

will say you lack ideas if you do that, so take care! Make a specialty of some particular style —Greek or Gothic, Pompadour or Chinese, immorality or virtue—never mind what, so long as it is the fad. But don't fail to court the dear public most assiduously, even servilely; and don't give them anything that is beyond their comprehension, too costly for their purses, or too large for their walls. Then you will see your works reproduced without end over all Europe! You will become the favourite of your generation. You will be hailed as a master, a glory, almost a religion. The despotism of your mediocrity shall stultify a whole people; it shall extend even to nature itself, because you, O master! shall cause it to be despised, since it will suggest your own daubs!

PAUL [*indignant*]: Never!

STRANGER: You are right! It is better and safer to get some kind of place first, some fixed appointment. First, I would recommend you to use the utmost exactness, not in your own work, but in criticising that of your fellow-workers. Just a word of disparagement here and there, you know —not a formal denunciation, for the interest of the brotherhood! Then circulate a clever bit of calumny—oh, don't be afraid of that! Show a certain arrogance towards humbler persons, but a becoming modesty before your chiefs; wear a starched cravat, but let your backbone be supple! Keep a cool head and give your conscience plenty of room. Give heed to abuse; promise much but fulfill little; bend your back to the storm, and in very difficult circumstances pretend to be dead!

But, above all, try to discover the secret vice of your superior; if he takes snuff, present him with a handsome snuff-box; or if he likes pretty women, marry one!

PAUL: Horror!

STRANGER: As to gaining an independence—I approve of that ambition. But fortunes are not made any more, Monsieur, except in trade. We have nowadays a system of honourable bankruptcies, and certain secrets regarding false weights and artificial colourings; but really, the quickest way for a young man to advance himself in a good house, is to make love to the wife of a wealthy *bourgeois!*

PAUL: Silence, villain!

STRANGER [*calmly*]: To be sure, it would be better to take his daughter, because then he would be compelled to give her to you in marriage. [Paul *recoils in horror*]

DOMINIQUE: There's some sense in what he says, after all.

STRANGER [*still calmly*]: Then, no matter what you may be, all obstacles will be removed; everyone will smile upon you; your health will be good; you will dine well; your face will be as rosy as that of a young girl. [*His beard suddenly disappears;* Paul *is amazed*] By degrees you will become rich, respected, happy. As you stroll along the boulevards, you will hear the creaking of your varnished shoes, as you twirl your gold-headed cane in your white-gloved hands. [*As he speaks he is changed into the representation of such a figure as he describes.* Paul *utters a cry*] You will be feared as well as loved; you can indulge

all your caprices; wear a new coat every day, rings on all your fingers, watch-chains, trinkets, and fine linen. [*His appearance now is that of a young "swell;"* Paul *and* Dominique *approach each other in terror*] You will buy a country house, statuary, a city mansion, have friends, race-horses, everything that is most expensive. And in order to pull the wool over the eyes of future generations, you will found a hospital, and grow old gracefully, attended by a throng of servants, surrounded by your family, loaded with honours, with a fat paunch and the guise of an honest man! [*His appearance changes to that of a substantial elderly bourgeois, with gold spectacles and a velvet waistcoat*]

PAUL [*hides his face with his hands*]: Is this an illusion? I hear a noise in my head like the rolling of cart-wheels! I see leaping flames!

(*The punch-bowl, from which flames have been leaping during the dialogue, is now multiplied into several punch-bowls, placed on the various small tables. Tongues of flame dart here and there, like will-o'-the-wisps*)

DOMINIQUE [*walks around the* Stranger *in admiration*]: What a wonderful man! What an extraordinary experience!

PAUL [*resolutely*]: No, I will not be tempted! Away! It is weakness even to listen to you. Away with you!

STRANGER: Just as you please! Play the virtuous, my fine fellow, and hug your empty stomach! Every door of fortune will be shut in your face. At

first, of course, you will try to keep up appearances, but soon you will slip out at nine o'clock in the evening to get a bottle of milk and a roll of bread, which you will eat as you go along the street. Then you will become familiar with all the makeshifts of poverty—paper collars, inked seams, tight trouser-straps to hold on your old shoes, and a black coat buttoned up to the chin to hide the absence of linen. [*He appears in the costume just described*] But you will not weaken! You will struggle along. No one will care a rap about you, however. No one will seek you out—who bothers his head over a poor chap? And as a first fall is the forerunner of a second, you will find yourself sinking lower, little by little, my fine fellow! Your misery will increase until it becomes irremediable and constitutional. "Click! clack! get out of the way, stupid!" the coachmen will cry. And from the gutter, in the freezing nights of winter, you will raise your eyes and behold behind lace curtains at the windows the gay world whirling about in the light of the blazing lamps; you will see all that your heart now covets! [*The right wall half opens, showing a scene representing a splendid ball-room full of dancers; the scene closes in*] Then will begin for you those long wanderings of the poor about Paris, along the quays and the boulevards. More uncertain and fatalistic than a Bedouin in the desert, you will watch your chance to seize upon a lost umbrella, a dropped purse; and at midnight you will sleep side by side with old convicts, on a bench, your feet in the straw and your arms resting on a rope! [*The left wall half opens, re-*

vealing a miserable lodging-house, filled with tramps, sleeping; the scene closes in] And even your shabby coat will then be gone. [*His coat disappears*] Instead of a hat you will wear an old cap without a brim. [*His hat disappears*] No waistcoat, and only a single suspender, and not even shoes and stockings. [*Assumes a servile attitude*] Shall I call a cab for you, Monsieur?

PAUL [*wrings his hands*]: Horrible! Horrible!

DOMINIQUE: Not a very inviting prospect, that's sure!

PAUL [*discouraged, falls on a stool and leans his elbows on the table*]: What shall I do?

(*At the close of the* Stranger's *last speech the* Maid *re-enters with a packet of cigars, which she puts on the table. The* Stranger *stands near* Paul, R.; *he takes a backward step, with a gesture of triumph, but at the same moment the* Maid-Servant, *who stands behind* Dominique, *facing the* Stranger, *changes into a* Fairy, *and extends her arm with an imperative gesture towards the* Stranger, *who changes into a* Gnome. Dominique, *astounded, utters a cry.* Paul *looks up, and he, too, cries out on perceiving the* Fairy, *who then disappears into the wall,* L., *while the* Gnome *vanishes into the wall,* R.)

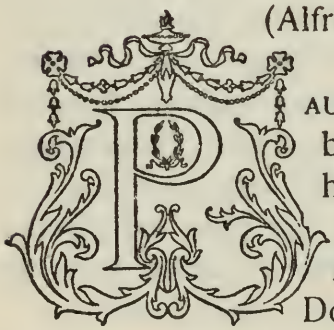
THIRD TABLEAU.

Slaves of the Gnomes.

Scene: *Apartment in the house of the banker*, Monsieur Kloekher; *a boudoir, with doors* R. *and* L. *and* C. *During the action of the first scene, footmen and maids cross the stage, carrying jardinières, as final preparations for an evening reception.*

Scene I.

(Alfred de Cisy, Paul)



Paul: My dear Alfred, have you brought me to Monsieur Kloekher's house on the night that he is giving a ball?

Alfred: What does that matter? Do you not feel yourself quite at home here? And then [*with emphasis*], as the ball has not begun yet, you may find an opportunity to have a private chat with the illustrious financier!

Paul: Ah, it is a real service that you have done me, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart, because without you I do not know what would have happened. Wherever I have called during the last month, the doors were closed

upon me. Ah! one's friends! And the temptations I have had, the efforts I have made! [*Bows his head*]

ALFRED: Come, cheer up! You must not give way to these melancholy, romantic and poetic ideas. [*Slaps* Paul *on the shoulder*] Good old Paul! he hasn't changed a bit; ready to take fire at sight of a pretty woman, and to be dazzled by all sorts of illusions. I'm thinking of the little adventure in the wine-shop, of which you told me. [*Laughs*]

PAUL: But when I tell you that I really saw—

ALFRED: Nonsense! you were the dupe of some hallucination, or of some clever trickster. As if one ever saw celestial beings disappear through the walls of a dirty little road-house! It is of no use for you to protest that she was as beautiful as a fairy, and that she was dressed like one. Fairies do not dwell in the Chaussée d'Antin, dear boy! But very soon I am going to present you to one who is called in society Madame Kloekher,—and she is a fairy who is rather kind to me!

PAUL: Ah! [*Bows*]

ALFRED: Why—yes,—that is the situation! I find it very interesting.

PAUL: And the husband?

ALFRED: Oh, he is an old fellow from Auvergnat. He entertains himself with plenty of others! Besides, he is a miserly old boor.

PAUL: Really! My father told me quite the contrary.

ALFRED: Did your father know him?

PAUL: Very well indeed. And he often spoke to me of his disinterestedness. I never met Monsieur Kloekher because—

ALFRED [*quickly*]: But if your father knew him well, what need had you of my services? You could have introduced yourself.

PAUL [*humbly*]: Ah, my friend, when one is poor, he is timid!

ALFRED [*aside*]: Poor! I did not know that he was poor. That's bad!

SCENE II.

(*Enter* M. Kloekher)

KLOEKHER: Vicomte, I am glad to see you.

ALFRED: Good evening to the great financier! Permit me to present to you one of my intimate friends, Monsieur Paul de Damvilliers.

KLOEKHER [*aside*]: *His* son!

ALFRED: He wants something or other—I don't know exactly what. He wishes to talk to you about himself. He is a good fellow—oh, excellent! And I have another favour to ask. May I be permitted to pay my respects to Madame—that is, if she is disengaged?

KLOEKHER: Certainly. I think you will find her in that room. [*Exit* Alfred] I knew your father very well, Monsieur, and as I had great esteem for him, the suddenness of his death affected me more than it might have affected those persons who did not know him so well. And have you not been able, up to the present, to discover or to guess the cause of the catastrophe?

PAUL: Alas! no, Monsieur. I have at last even given up trying to discover the cause.

KLOEKHER [*sighs deeply*]: I think you act wisely. It would be only a loss of time to make further research. [*Coolly*] And you wish—?

PAUL: To work, Monsieur! My expectations would be very modest.

KLOEKHER: How old are you, if you please?

PAUL: Twenty-five years old, Monsieur.

KLOEKHER: Um! Rather young! And what do you know of the accounting and banking business?

PAUL: Very little, it is true, but I should learn quickly.

KLOEKHER: Ah, you think so? And what have you done heretofore?

PAUL: I have travelled.

KLOEKHER: Where? And with what purpose?

PAUL: In the north of Africa and as far as China, to inform myself.

KLOEKHER: Or to amuse yourself more freely—come! own up to it! It is a very pretty way to spend one's fortune; you assume the polished air of a serious man, stare at the idlers as they stroll along, bring home long pipes for your friends and Turkish slippers for—the girls! Ah, young men! young men! They are very amusing, my word of honour!

PAUL [*irritated*]: Monsieur!

KLOEKHER: Say no more! I know all about that kind of study. I'll wager you can't tell me even the name of the principal banking-house of Macao, nor the rate of discount at Calcutta.

PAUL: But there are other things worth knowing!

KLOEKHER: That is possible. But why are you here? What do you wish?

PAUL: I desire a place, Monsieur, any kind of place. I can translate your correspondence, and make out your bills. One man is as good as another, if only he has strength and courage. I beg you to consider the situation, difficult as I find it to do so; and I venture, in order to strengthen my request, to remind you that my father was your friend.

KLOEKHER: Ah, your father, Monsieur, was a fine man, and if he had only followed my advice he would not have ended his career so disastrously. Instead of playing the grand seigneur and trying to dazzle beholders with ill-considered liberality, he would have guarded his capital, increased his fortune, made himself useful, in short. [*In a tone of affected good-fellowship*] I have suffered enough from the affection that I bore him without your coming here, you his son, to give me the trouble of refusing you. A place, indeed! Do you think that I have one for you? My clerkships are all filled — I can't help that, can I? I am extremely sorry! [*Sits.* Paul *goes up stage, about to exit* C. Kloekher *springs up*] Oh, no! Wait! Come back!

PAUL [*proudly*]: Why, may I ask?

KLOEKHER: I wish to do something for you if I can. [*Looks intently into* Paul's *face*] If I am any judge of men, I think I can read you. Now, I trust that your intelligence will enable you to understand me; and, in case you refuse what I am about to propose, that you will keep silent regarding it.

PAUL: Be assured—

KLOEKHER: Until now I have always conducted my affairs on the Bourse in a strictly business-like and open manner; but after to-day—because of circumstances that would take too long to explain now, and which you would not understand—I shall be compelled to manage certain matters in a different way,—that is, through the hands of another person. [*Silence*]

PAUL [*tries to comprehend*]: That is to say—

KLOEKHER: That I need a trustworthy man—you understand! I should advise him about everything, of course, but I want a reliable young man, who will represent me absolutely, follow my orders, and act for me.

PAUL: Well?

KLOEKHER: But he must appear to the public as if he were acting only for himself, in his own name.

PAUL: But—the responsibility—

KLOEKHER: There is no chance of loss, I assure you. There will be little to do, and I shall give you ten per cent. of the profits. Now, as the profits in this kind of operations amount to at least a million francs annually, you will have a hundred thousand francs a year. An income of a hundred thousand francs, young man!

PAUL: A hundred thousand francs' income! [*Ponders deeply; then aside*] Impossible! There must be something mysterious under all this.

KLOEKHER [*aside*]: He hesitates! Is it from ignorance or from scruples?

PAUL: How can you tell beforehand that you will not lose in this scheme?

KLOEKHER: By a series of calculations,—of infallible combinations. I will explain to you—

PAUL: And why, then, do you need my name?

KLOEKHER: Why? [*They looked fixedly at each other*] I don't care to explain that now. But you understand me perfectly well. The affair is pressing.

PAUL: Enough, Monsieur, enough! I will spare you, through shame, from using the word to be found in the penal code that describes your "infallible combinations." You would borrow my name to use in your nefarious schemes, but as I do not wish to be either your accomplice or your victim, I will leave you!

KLOEKHER [*turns his head*]: Fool! Get out!

(*As* Paul *is about to leave by door* C. *enter* Monsieur Letourneux; *they meet*)

SCENE III.

LETOURNEUX [*joyfully surprised*]: Paul! What a pleasure!

KLOEKHER [*aside*]: They know each other!

LETOURNEUX: Let me embrace you, my dear boy! As soon as I knew you were in Paris, I came as quickly as possible from Guyenne, where I had gone to study agriculture a bit—and to have a little lark! Well, this is a lucky chance, indeed! [*Aside, shakes his fist at* Kloekher's *back*] I've caught you, you old rascal! [*Aloud*] We actually believed you were dead, do you know that?

Isn't that so, Kloekher? Your enemies — because you have enemies, everyone has them — flattered themselves they never should see you again!

PAUL: And who can wish harm to me? I never have injured any one.

LETOURNEUX: What an interesting young man you are! The living image of that good Damvilliers, whose memory we cherish.

PAUL: I do not know how to thank you —

LETOURNEUX: This may certainly be called a lucky day; first I find the son of an old friend; then I intend to relieve some unfortunate persons, — and I shall owe that pleasure to you, Kloekher.

KLOEKHER: What?

LETOURNEUX: Yes, of course; haven't I come here to thank you for the twenty-five thousand francs you gave me for the poor of my parish?

KLOEKHER: Oh, indeed!

LETOURNEUX: That's the way with him; he likes to hide his charities. What a man! [*Contemplates* Paul] It is a pleasure to meet again, is it not? I hope you will tell me all about your travels. In running about the world you must have seen many strange characters and queer manners; and, as your observations are without doubt those of a serious mind, perceiving the moral of everything, I wish to ask you this: which do you believe to be the more common, trickery or ingratitude, rascality or stupidity?

PAUL: Why, really — these questions require deliberation.

LETOURNEUX: And you, Kloekher, — what is your opinion?

KLOEKHER: I do not understand you.

LETOURNEUX [*approaches* Kloekher *and looks steadily in his face*]: Ah, you do not understand. Are you quite sure? We will talk about that again. I wish to say now that I forgot to tell you that I desire to have immediately, in order to open a model farm, the one hundred and seventy-two shares of Mediterranean that I sold you the day before yesterday.

KLOEKHER: Is this one of your little jokes?

LETOURNEUX: Not at all, my dear fellow; no more so than is the little story I am about to relate. [*To* Paul] Do you know Cochin China?

PAUL: A little.

LETOURNEUX: Very well. Once, in that country—this occurred five years ago—lived two friends, a good Chinaman and a bad Chinaman. Now, the good Chinaman was so innocent that he trusted the bad one—

KLOEKHER [*angrily*]: I don't care about hearing your story!

LETOURNEUX: It is a true tale, however, and I—can furnish the proofs! [*Silence*]

KLOEKHER [*astonished*]: Proofs?

LETOURNEUX [*takes* Kloekher *by the elbow and speaks in his ear*]: They are all in my hands—without exception. Do you understand?

KLOEKHER [*aside*]: Well, well, we can arrange all that. Keep quiet! [*Turns to* Paul *and breaks into a hearty laugh*] Ha! ha! Letourneux, the joke worked all right. He really believed I had no place for him! Ha! ha! Just imagine! I gave him a yarn about some private service that I required of him—a funny idea that I proposed—and he believed it! Ha! ha! He is a good fellow!

PAUL: I don't understand.

KLOEKHER: What I said was only to try you, dear boy! [*Laughs; then seriously*] I wished to learn, by that means, your real nature. Now I am satisfied with you, young man. Everything is all right. You have so much delicacy—such fine principles!

LETOURNEUX: And that means everything—to have good principles. It is the foundation of a good character. As soon as we know a man has sound principles, we trust him. I will guarantee Paul's principles to you, Monsieur.

KLOEKHER: The son of our best friend,—I should think so indeed! [*Enter* Madame Kloekher *in ball costume*] My wife! You must allow me to present you. Permit me! [*Approaches* Mme. Kloekher *and speaks to her aside, quickly*] Listen! This is something that affects the fate of both of us! That man there can ruin me, if he chooses. Be gracious to him; be wary—it is absolutely necessary. [*Aloud*] Madame Kloekher, Monsieur Paul de Damvilliers.

MME. KLOEKHER: Oh, I have known you by name a very long time, Monsieur.

PAUL [*aside*]: How beautiful she is!

MME. KLOEKHER: My husband and I have so often talked together of your poor father.

LETOURNEUX: Yes, we have all spoken of him.

PAUL [*aside*]: What eyes!

KLOEKHER: Poor boy! to come back after five years' absence and find his home gone! But I mean that mine shall take the place of it. Do not be troubled! Make use of me as a friend. Treat me with confidence.

PAUL: Oh, thank you, Monsieur! But as I fear I cannot altogether control my emotion, pray allow me to retire. [*About to go*]

KLOEKHER: No, no! stay here! You are one of us now. Besides, you have only just arrived. Go on talking to Madame. Come, Letourneux, we'll take a turn through the large drawing-room; I wish to speak to you about one or two important matters. [*Exit* Kloekher *and* Letourneux.

SCENE IV.

MME. KLOEKHER: There is no need of my repeating the intentions of my husband, Monsieur, but you will permit me to say that I share his feelings too much not to desire to be friendly to you, and even—pardon the word!—useful to you, if I can.

PAUL: Oh, Madame, you embarrass me!

MME. KLOEKHER: It would give us great pleasure to be able to make you forget your griefs, or at least to soften the memory of them.

PAUL: You have done that already, Madame, by your unexpected kindness.

MME. KLOEKHER: You must have suffered cruelly, Monsieur.

PAUL: Alas, yes!

MME. KLOEKHER: Why did you not come to us sooner?

PAUL: Ah, Madame, my excuse, though sincere, is a very bad one, but—

MME. KLOEKHER: But what?

PAUL: Pardon me! I dared not!

MME. KLOEKHER: Foolish boy! But there! you are to make up for all that—I insist upon it. We receive our friends every Thursday at seven o'clock, don't forget! I will introduce you to some of my friends, clever women who will please you. I hope you will often drop into my box at the opera for a little chat. And if you find time hangs heavy on your hands in the afternoons, I shall be glad to offer you a seat in my carriage, and we can take a turn through the Bois and around the lake. It is a dreadful bore to be compelled to go alone every day around that same old lake. But where else can one go? Since you draw, it would be charming if you would bring me your sketches of travel, and I will show you my own drawings, only I must first beg your indulgence before you examine my poor little water-colours. And we shall read together and have nice long talks, and be the best of friends. That is, I hope we shall!

PAUL: Oh, thank you, Madame! You are as kind as an angel. This is the first sympathy I have found since my misfortune came upon me. What have I done to merit such goodness? To whom do I owe it?

MME. KLOEKHER: To the memory of your father, to the wish of my husband, to your position, and—a little—to yourself! [*Extends her hand;* Paul *seizes and kisses it; she withdraws it quickly*] Monsieur!

PAUL: Pardon me! I was too bold, I know. My impulsive gratitude seemed an impertinence to you, I fear.

MME. KLOEKHER: We will not speak of it again. Let us go to the ball-room. Come!

PAUL: Before you have pardoned me? For heaven's sake, Madame, don't be vexed with me! Excuse my fault! One must have a little indulgence for a man who had been abandoned by all his former friends, who is weary of deceptions, embittered by unhappiness.

MME. KLOEKHER [*softly*]: Unhappiness! Ah, there is one more bond of sympathy between us! [Paul *shows surprise*] Yes, alas! I have my own sufferings, and perhaps they are as deep as your own.

PAUL: You! How can that be?

MME. KLOEKHER: Ah, Monsieur de Damvilliers, surely a man of your birth does not share the idea of the common people that one must be contented and have nothing more to ask of heaven simply because one is rich! No, no! you do not think that.

PAUL: Explain to me—

MME. KLOEKHER: I will later—my friend!

(*The side scenes and back drop enclosing the boudoir slide out of sight, showing the full depth and breadth of the stage, arranged as a ball-room*)

MME. KLOEKHER: Your arm, if you please.

PAUL [*aside*]: Her friend! She called me her friend!

(*On each side of the stage are columns reaching to the flies, and ornamented with gilded caryatides; between the columns stand jardinières filled with flowers, leaving a space also for candelabra to stand between*

the columns. Three arches at the back reveal another apartment, where a buffet stands, covered with glass and silver)

Scene V.

(Paul, Mme. Kloekher, Onésime Dubois, Macaret, Bouvignard, Alfred de Cisy, Doctor Colombel, *Ladies and Gentlemen*, *Servants*, *etc.* Mme. Kloekher *walks up stage leaning on* Paul's *arm; several guests approach them*)

Guests [*salutes* Mme. Kloekher]: What a delightful reception! Charming! Superb, indeed!

A Lady [*to another lady*]: Who is that young man? He is very pleasing.

Second Lady: I should not regard him as very pleasing, if I were the Vicomte Alfred de Cisy!

One of Kloekher's Clerks [*to a fellow-employé*]: Just look at her mincing along! What grimaces! But there's no danger that we poor clerks shall be honoured by even a glance.

Mme. Kloekher [*admires the frock of a young lady*]: Oh, ravishing! Who is your modiste, my dear? [*To another lady*] What, are you not dancing? [*To an elderly gentleman*] Good evening, General! [*To* Dr. Colombel.] It is very kind of you, Doctor Colombel, to leave your patients to come to us.

Colombel: If my patients could only see our charming hostess, they would soon recover their health at the sight of so much grace and freshness! [*A servant speaks to* Mme. Kloekher]

MME. KLOEKHER: I will go directly. [Alfred de Cisy, *who has been trying for some minutes to get to* Mme. Kloekher, *now approaches her, just as she reaches* R. I. E. *She smiles at* Paul] I thank you, Monsieur. I will return immediately.

[*Exit* R.

ALFRED [*aside*]: I've done a fine thing in introducing him here! I must act with prudence and shrewdness. [*Exit after* Mme. Kloekher]

SCENE VI.

ONÉSIME [*approaches* Paul *and shakes both his hands cordially*]: What a pleasure it is to see you! I hope we shall meet often. Where are you staying? I don't intend to lose sight of you.

PAUL: Thank you, old comrade. And how about that great picture? I hope you are still enthusiastic over it, and that you still cherish your high ideals, as well as your dislike of the *bourgeois* in art.

ONÉSIME: Oh, of course! But just at present I am painting small pictures, domestic subjects — there is a better market for them. Pray accept my congratulations. I am so glad to see you now on the road to prosperity. [*Guests gather around* Paul]

MACARET: My dear Monsieur de Damvilliers, I was quite sure I should meet you here, otherwise I should —

COLOMBEL [*interrupts*]: Thanks to the inconceivable stupidity of my valet, your two visiting-cards were thrown away, and only last night I —

BOUVIGNARD [*interrupts*]: I don't know how it was, but every day, just as I had made up my mind to go to see you, a crowd of visitors would come and prevent me from leaving the house; one wanted one thing; another demanded something else. I am simply harassed to death, and pulled this way and that by everybody.

MACARET: Well, we all look to you for everything, you know, Monsieur. [*Aside*] He has the ear of the minister!

COLOMBEL: You must name what day you will come to dine with me regularly once a week.

BOUVIGNARD: And don't fail to tell me, my dear fellow, in what way I can be useful to you. [*Guests clap* Paul *heartily on the shoulders*]

PAUL: Ah, my friends, you quite overcome me! [*Aside*] How kind-hearted they are, and how unjustly mankind has been calumniated.

SCENE VII.

(*Enter* Letourneux; *crosses to* Onésime, *who stands near* Paul)

LETOURNEUX: I am not pleased with you, Onésime.

ONÉSIME: Indeed! And why?

LETOURNEUX [*hesitates*]: Well—between intimate friends one need not mince matters. Every one here, except Paul, knows of your approaching marriage. It was I that arranged the matter for you, and presented you to an excellent family, pious, highly esteemed and wealthy; and here

you run the risk of raising a scandal by allowing yourself to be seen in full daylight, with a decidedly shady young person on your arm!

ONÉSIME: I?

LETOURNEUX: Yes, you! I saw you myself, although you assured me that you had done with the young woman.

ONÉSIME: Wait a moment, Monsieur Letourneux. When you saw me with that little girl, I was making arrangements to send her away on a journey.

COLOMBEL: Oh, tell us about it! I like a good spicy story! [*The men surround* Onésime *and* Letourneux]

ONÉSIME: Well, you see, I had a letter sent to her from Marseilles — which is her home — urging her to go there immediately to attend to some important business. She has gone, and that gives me time to be married, besides making me quite easy in my mind, because Clémence has very little money, and in order to return here — [*All laugh, with expressions of approval*]

LETOURNEUX: Good! Now that's what I call a highly moral action, and at the same time very clever.

PAUL: What! Is this Clémence your old flame, the girl you took from her family when she was very young,—the one who, as you told me once, worked for you, after a fashion?

ONÉSIME: Yes, it is she. But — other times, other women! [*To* Letourneux] Where did you see me with her?

LETOURNEUX: In the Luxembourg, as I was passing through it on my way to help a very interesting family: three sons out of work, and their father

and mother almost in the last stage of starvation. You ought to do something for them, Doctor.

COLOMBEL: Really? I ought to go and visit them, perhaps?

LETOURNEUX: You are rich enough to allow yourself such a luxury, surely.

COLOMBEL: And you, the millionaire—what are you doing for them?

LETOURNEUX: I? Why, I do a few things. I console them and moralise to them—no more than that—and wherever I go I try to interest people in them, even Monsieur Macaret. [*Turns to* Macaret] You, Monsieur, are one of our great captains of industry, you might employ the sons; three more workmen would not matter to you.

MACARET: Impossible! I have no work to give them. You do not expect me to ruin myself, I suppose. [Colombel *smiles*, Letourneux *joins his hands with a sanctimonious expression;* Paul *makes a gesture of indignation*]

BOUVIGNARD [*laughs bitterly*]: Ha! ha! He is quite right. All the talk, all the assistance, and all the utopian ideas in the world, do no good. The social machinery runs itself, and those that fall under the wheels—all the worse for them! We cannot help it, so let us resign ourselves. The only really serious thing in the world, the only thing that appeals to the higher intelligence, is the study of the fine arts.

ONÉSIME: You are right, Monsieur Bouvignard.

BOUVIGNARD: As for me, my favourite diversion is the study of faïence.

COLOMBEL: A charming taste! And the ladies—

BOUVIGNARD: Oh! we understand one another! My special fad is for old Nevers; and in order to obtain an authentic specimen of it I spare neither time, pains, nor money.

ONÉSIME [*aside*]: He would do much better if he would set aside a *dot* for his daughter!

BOUVIGNARD: Ah, yes, I economise; I deny myself; I bleed myself! And the anxieties I have! Just think! a slight awkwardness might reduce my whole collection to a thousand pieces. And it is unique, I assure you. It represents my whole fortune, and in order that it may remain intact, I have left it in my will to my native city.

PAUL [*aside, stands a little apart*]: What a sad sort of world is this!

SCENE VIII.

(*Enter* Kloekher)

KLOEKHER [*to* Letourneux]: Will you come along? Come, you serious ones! the green table is waiting for you. Who wishes to play whist? [*All move up stage and exit* R. *and* L., *leaving* Paul *alone. As soon as the stage is clear of* Guests, *the* King of the Gnomes *appears between two of the caryatides; he is dressed like a Bourgeois, as in the wine-shop in Tableau II. With meaning gestures, he points out to* Paul *the beauty of the surroundings and the splendour of the ball.* Mme. Kloekher *passes slowly across the stage from* R. *to* L., *under the arches at the rear. The* Gnome *points at her and claps his hands together silently,*

with the gesture of one applauding; then slowly goes up stage. Mme. Kloekher *disappears*]

PAUL [*follows* Gnome *a few steps up stage*]: Why, that is the mysterious being of the wine-shop! [*Stares at him.* Queen of the Fairies, *in full fairy costume, glides upon the stage from* L., *and fixes her eyes upon the* Gnome] And there is the other! [Queen *and* King *vanish*] Am I mad? My former illusion has returned; it is very strange. No doubt it is the result of—of trouble, and—and the enchantment that lovely woman has thrown around me. Ah, what eyes! What a smile! Is she only playing with me? Just now I felt her hand tremble upon my arm; her glance seemed to caress me; I could see that her heart throbbed! She—she loves me! [*The lights in the candelabra near him suddenly go out*] What is that? Is it midnight? Oh, no, nothing of the sort. [*Paces to and fro*] And it is I whom she distinguishes among all these men, illustrious, rich, and handsome! I am stronger than all of them; I dominate them; I am almost the king of the world, when only yesterday I was lost, struggling against fate. Ah, what happiness! How sweet these flowers are! [*Bends over a jardinière; the flowers fade and droop*] What! Dead? [*Two more candelabra are suddenly extinguished*] The darkness increases! [*Instead of the tinkle of the bell that has been audible without, marking the measure of a quadrille, a sound like a passing-bell is heard*] That sound—a funeral knell! I am alarmed! [*Peers into the shadows and looks off up stage*] But the lamps are burning and the dance is going on. That was only the

bell that marks the quadrille. What is the matter with me? Ah, she is coming back! Yes, there she is. I must not appear to be different from any other guest at the ball; I must affect to listen indifferently to her charming voice murmuring in my ear. Everything belonging to her seems to me to radiate happiness; it is as if her spirit floated near me. Where is she? I long to see her again—to speak to her! [*Paces to and fro*]

SCENE IX.

(*Enter* Mme. Kloekher *and* Alfred, R.; *she leans on his arm*)

PAUL [*aside*]: Still with her! [*Observes them*]

MME. KLOEKHER: Is that a threat, then?

ALFRED: Just as you choose to understand it, my dear.

MME. KLOEKHER [*disdainfully*]: Do it, then! Do it!

ALFRED: Very well, since that is your decision. All is over between us. But—suppose I blow my brains out here—at your ball?

MME. KLOEKHER [*laughs loudly*]: Oh! ha! ha! ha! That would be too absurd!

ALFRED [*aside, puts on his hat*]: Indeed! Well, we'll try another way! [*Exit. Dance music stops; attendants begin to serve supper upon small round tables back of the arches* C.]

SCENE X.

PAUL: So—that man loves you!

MME. KLOEKHER: He? Never!

PAUL: But—

MME. KLOEKHER: What! Reproaches already?

PAUL: Oh, I was wrong,—I know it. Pardon me! It is not my fault if—

MME. KLOEKHER: Speak lower. Some one may hear you.

PAUL [*looks up stage*]: No, until supper is over no one will come in here. Listen to me, Madame! In heaven's name, stay here with me!

MME. KLOEKHER: Well, I am here. What do you wish?

PAUL: I cannot tell you now; my head is in a whirl. I am so happy only to be able to look at you, face to face. Just now, when we were with the others and every one was pressing near you, I was delighted to observe the glances of admiration and homage that were cast upon you, and to listen to the murmurs of approval and envy. But soon it began to displease me—I hated it! Yes, because you gave back your smiles, your sweet words, which seem almost a part of yourself, of your very heart. These surroundings, the gilding on the walls, the silver ornaments, the servants, the music, even your diamonds, seem only so many things to disguise you the more, to hold you farther from me, to separate your heart from mine!

MME. KLOEKHER: What an impetuous boy you are! But you must know only too well—[*Silence*]

PAUL: What? Speak! speak!

MME. KLOEKHER: That—that one cannot help liking you!

PAUL [*approaches her and takes her hand*]: Is that true? Ah, speak the dear word I long to hear! I am not accustomed to happiness, Madame, and how do you think I can believe that if I do not hear

the sweet assurance from your own lips? But no,—do not say it! If you really love me—which is the same as to say that heaven itself is about to open for me—make me only one little sign, give me one smile!

(Mme. Kloekher *looks at* Paul *smilingly and makes a gentle inclination of her head.* Paul *seizes her hand, kisses it, and sinks on one knee before her*)

MME. KLOEKHER: Take care! Some one will see us! [*Aside*] What fire! What passion! [Paul *rises*]

PAUL: Oh, this is torture! You do not realise that I love you to madness! I would destroy everything that keeps us from each other. What would it cost you to grant me, wherever you choose, one hour, where I might carry out my delusion and imagine you and myself the only beings in the world? Would it be too much for you to grant me this—tell me?

MME. KLOEKHER: Some one comes! Retire for a moment. [Paul *disappears* R. *between two caryatides*]

SCENE XI.

(*Enter* Letourneux *hastily*)

LETOURNEUX: Well, Madame, your husband has given me a fine specimen of friendship!

MME. KLOEKHER: What is the matter with him?

LETOURNEUX: I am indignant!

MME. KLOEKHER: There! there! Calm yourself, I beg.

LETOURNEUX: But I shall be avenged! Oh, yes!

MME. KLOEKHER: What has he done to you?

LETOURNEUX: You ask me that? She asks me that! Ha! Well, Madame, we had agreed — your charming husband and I — upon a transaction regarding two hundred shares of Hanover, at the latest price quoted, the profit of which he was to give me and I was to pocket it. Is that clear? Now, when I bring him the papers of agreement and ask him to settle, he reluctantly hands over only half of what he ought to give me! But he cannot play that sort of trick on me. Where is Paul? I intend to tell him everything.

MME. KLOEKHER: Good heavens! what?

LETOURNEUX: I shall tell him what you know as well as I, Madame. I mean the fact that your husband has robbed him of his inheritance. And a lawsuit will make the affair talked of over all Europe.

MME. KLOEKHER: And you count upon Paul — as if it were possible!

LETOURNEUX: And why not, pray?

MME. KLOEKHER: You are too curious, my dear sir! However, to save you trouble, I will tell you that Paul is only a simple youth, a mere child, and that — he is in love with me!

LETOURNEUX: A fine reason!

MME. KLOEKHER: Excellent, I assure you. It is our family, it is I whom he will believe, and not you, important man though you are. Go elsewhere to find aid in your turpitude and your revenge. As to Paul, I repeat, he belongs to me. He is my thing, my slave, and at a sign from me he would gladly throw himself into a pit!

LETOURNEUX: We shall see, Madame, we shall see!

[*Exit* C.

Scene XII.

Paul [*re-enters slowly from behind the caryatid*]: You are right, Madame; I am a mere child, your thing and your slave!

Mme. Kloekher: Heavens! Do not believe—

Paul: I have heard all! I was behind that statue, where I hid in order to listen to the confidences of perhaps another lover. Chance has punished me for my jealousy in cruelly undeceiving me.

Mme. Kloekher: Oh, Paul, I swear to you—

Paul: No vows, I beg of you! Fear nothing! Never shall I injure by the scandal of a lawsuit, the woman, whatever she may be, whom I have —*honoured* with my love! So calm yourself and permit me to retire.

Mme. Kloekher: But you have not understood—I am not to blame—it is an odious plot—I will explain to you! Paul, I entreat you! Paul, I love you!

(Paul *is about to go*, L. *with bent head and heavy step. At the door he pauses. Enter* Letourneux *hastily; he approaches* Paul)

Scene XIII.

(*During the following dialogue the other guests enter in small groups, and listen to the conversation*)

Letourneux: At last I have found you again. Listen to me! [Paul *stands motionless, lost in thought*]

Paul! [*Taps* Paul *on the shoulder*] My friend! Paul, my dear boy!

PAUL [*turns his head slowly*]: What do you wish?

LETOURNEUX [*raises his voice*]: I wish to inform you, as well as everyone present—in your own interest as well as for the sake of public morality, in order to bring about at the same time a reparation and a just punishment—I wish, I say, to reveal to you an infamous plot of which you are the victim. I possess authentic proofs—written documents! You have been shamefully cheated by that man—Kloekher, the banker! [*Sensation; murmurs of surprise and indignation*]

PAUL [*tears off his white glove*]: Monsieur, you are an impudent liar!

LETOURNEUX: I!

PAUL: Yes, you, villain! and as an emphasis to what I have said, I insult you to your face! [*Throws his glove in* Letourneux' *face*]

LETOURNEUX: Ah!

PAUL [*bows*]: I am at your service, Monsieur!

GUESTS: Separate them! They will fight!

LETOURNEUX: A duel! A man of my character is not ruled by such means. True strength lies rather in enduring physical injury and in seeking revenge by a legal process. I have plenty of civil courage! [*Exit proudly.*

PAUL [*in suppressed rage*]: Infamous rascal!

KLOEKHER [*tries to take* Paul's *hand*]: Ah, my dear fellow, how wisely you have acted! You have shown yourself a true friend. My gratitude—

PAUL: Do not speak to me again, Monsieur! [*Exit.*

KLOEKHER: What is the matter with him?

GUESTS: What a queer fellow! Did you see him?

GUESTS: Such a scandal to happen at a ball! Dear! dear! one never knows what will happen!

(*Guests depart. After they have gone and the stage is clear, the lights burn brighter, with pink, green, and blue tints. The flowers in the jardinières revive and bloom anew. The caryatides* R. *and* L. *move and express pleasure in gestures. They are the* Fairies, *who rejoice at the evidence of* Paul's *virtue*)

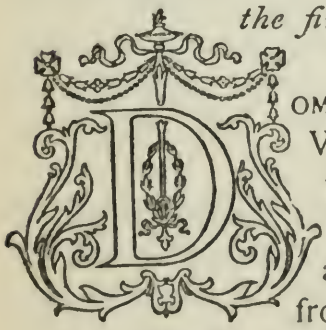
FOURTH TABLEAU.

Paul the Deliverer.

Scene: *A miserably furnished apartment. Small windows* R. *and* L. *At the back*, C. *a chimney with a dying charcoal fire. A door* L. *of chimney. On the mantelpiece is a box containing pistols. Near* L. I. E. *is a rough table and two cane-seated chairs. Near* R. I. E. *a pair of varnished boots on a boot-tree. Close beside these is a bed, and at* L. I. E. *there is a small closet. Day is breaking; a dim light comes through the curtainless windows.*

Scene I.

(*Enter* Dominique; *he is dressed in shirt and trousers, without a waistcoat, and has a Madras handkerchief bound around his head. Approaches the fireplace; his teeth chatter*)



OMINIQUE: Heavens! how cold it is! When Monsieur Paul returns he will be half frozen. [*Laughs ironically*] Ah, Monsieur! Well, and how about me? Am I not frozen? Don't I suffer? What kind of life is this miserable existence? Let him do as he pleases, if it amuses him, but as for

me — a man born to shine in the ante-chambers of ambassadors, at the very least — this sort of life is a humiliation. [*Searches about the room*] And not a stick of wood in this infernal garret, full of draughts! [*Still searching*] No, not one!

It is four months now that I have been cooped up here, trying to pass away the time while he was making his applications. First, he was after a place in the diplomatic service; then a scientific mission; next an inspectorship of I don't know what; and this evening he said he would surely return from the house of the banker Kloekher with full hands and his future provided for. I begin to have some doubts of our future myself! I have wished to separate mine from his and to present him squarely with my bill. Monsieur is a fine young man, that's certain. But [*taps his forehead*] a little bit touched! The devil! my hands are numb with cold! [*Looks at pistols on the mantelpiece*] There is a box that tempts me very much. But no! our means do not allow us to indulge in a mahogany case! No, indeed! [*In backing away from the chimney he stumbles upon a straw mat*] Stupid! what am I about? Wait a bit! [*Picks up the mat, throws it on the fire and watches it burn*] To be reduced to this! But our bad luck cannot last much longer — it is too wretched. However, if it doesn't change within a week I shall say good-bye! [*The fire flames up; he rubs his hands over it*] Ah, that feels good! That was decidedly a bright idea of mine. What's the use of bothering oneself to keep things? Pity we haven't a good substantial sofa to toast our toes by while

poking the fire. What a miserable little chair that is! Since my master is out all day running about, I don't see why I shouldn't—[*Throws a small chair into the fire*] There you go! Any one would say that I am a simpleton to devote myself to him. There never was such a valet as I. Great heavens! how cold it is! That chair burns like a match. And, after all his promises, what do I get? How am I benefited? He will only laugh at me in the end, and while I stay here, dancing attendance on him and freezing to death, he is playing the gallant in the drawing-rooms of charming ladies! Suppose I break up the table to keep the fire going? No, it would soon be gone. [*Sees boots*] Ah, the boots! [*Pulls them off the boot-tree*] Why not? [*Throws them in the fire*] Burn, then! Perhaps he'll be angry. Ah, well, so much the worse!

Scene II.

(*Enter* Paul, *in evening dress, without an overcoat; his clothes are damp; there is a little snow on his shoulders; he carries his hands tucked under his arms*)

Paul: What are you doing there? I did not tell you to wait for me. Go to bed!

Dominique: But—

Paul [*brutally*]: Get along with you! Get out! Leave me!

DOMINIQUE: Oho! He is very proud and touchy. Something good must have happened at last.

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

PAUL [*remains for some time with his head resting in his hands, then sighs deeply*]: Ah! [*Throws his hat on the bed*] What a night! [*Looks slowly around the room*] And what a place! [*Glances at window*] Why, day is breaking, and it is still snowing. But nothing will fall from heaven to blot out all my misery. [*Weeps*] Ah, how weary I am! [*Stands in front of the fireplace, his arm leaning on the mantel-piece*] They are all cowards, egoists, cruel, ingrates and hypocrites! And with what smiles, sweet words, affectionate embraces, and even, O sacrilege! professions of love! And I hoped to find in this arid desert something to quench the thirst of my heart! In how many countries have I dreamed my dreams? And everywhere, among masks and brazen vice, have I met the same ignominious deceptions. And now they seek me out; they attack me. Enough, enough! I'll have no more of it. Why should I continue to live, since I cannot change the world? If I could only find one single soul that would really love me! [*Walks about*] Come! no more weakness! I will leave all at once, before my resolution weakens, before I feel the first blush of shame, in all the integrity of my pride and honour, like the ancient Oriental kings, who killed themselves in

the midst of their riches. It needs only strong resolution for a moment. That should not be difficult. Everything urges me to it. [*Sees the box of pistols*] Ah, even chance itself! [*Takes pistols from box and examines them*] The man that sold them to me laid particular stress upon the length of their range. But at the distance I shall require, they need not be anything out of the common! That would be quite superfluous. Let us try. [*Snaps the hammer*] Good! Where is my powder? [*Takes box of powder and pours a little into his hand, then puts it into the pistol, throwing the rest into the fire, which springs up into bright flames. He continues to load the pistol*] Now the bullet, next the cap; and now I have only to give myself a sign, to make a single gesture, to be free! [*Six o'clock strikes from a neighbouring clock*] Six o'clock! At the first stroke of the half hour, all will be over! [*Looks around the room and sees a box full of letters on the table*] Oh—those! I had forgotten them. Nothing of myself or of my past must remain. All letters must be burned. [*Throws letters into the fire and sinks into a chair*] Ah, the flames warm me again. I do not suffer now. No, quite the contrary. To think that perhaps those ashes will still be warm after my body is cold in death! Then,—everything belonging to me will be scattered, dispersed. My life will have passed, like the fading figures that trace themselves in the coals. [*Stares at the fire*] It seems to me I can see among the embers purple shores along a lake of fire. Beyond that are shadowy buildings, the

spires of a cathedral, the masts of vessels. They fade—then reappear, like my former dreams. I fancy I hear the wind among the sails, and the walls of my cabin creaking in the night watches! Ha! that is strange! There is one letter that refuses to burn. It even grows whiter in the flames. What is that? [*Picks the letter from the fire*] It is not even hot! What is the meaning of this? [*The fireplace, little by little, is enlarged, growing higher and wider, and back of the flames appear the scenes of which* Paul *has just spoken. At last a castle of strange architecture is visible, having small windows, like those of a fort*] Is that a fortress? I never saw it before. [*The letter glows with a soft radiance.* Paul *reads*] "Behold the castle wherein the wicked Gnomes hold captive the hearts of men. We depend upon thee to deliver them. Thy reward shall be a love surpassing all thy dreams. Thou wilt meet often the one whom we have chosen for thee; try to recognise her, else thou wilt be irrevocably lost. Art thou ready? The Queen of the Fairies." I? But how am I to know?

(*Chorus of* Fairies *encourages him*)

PAUL [*remains for some moments a prey to terrible anxiety; then with a gesture of heroic resolution*]: I accept! I will go! [*Two knocks on the door are heard*]

VOICE [*without*]: Open, Dominique! [*Knock*]

PAUL: Who is there? [*Opens the door*]

Scene IV.

(*Enter* Jeanne, *carrying a large basket on each arm*)

Jeanne [*surprised*]: Monsieur Paul!

Paul: Jeannette! What does this mean? [Jeanne *puts her baskets on the table with an air of fatigue*] What has brought you to Paris? [*Silence*]

Jeanne: To—to sell milk, Monsieur!

Paul: Milk! With those two baskets—and at my rooms? [Jeanne *hangs her head*] You are hiding something from me, Jeannette.

Jeanne [*shields with her arm the basket near her*]: No, Monsieur, I declare to you—

Paul [*observes her gesture*]: There is something inside of that basket. [*Lifts the lid*] My silk handkerchiefs, my shirts—all my linen! [*Looks sternly at* Jeanne]

Jeanne [*quickly*]: Oh, don't be angry! If they are not well done, I will do them all over again. [*Silence.* Jeanne *hangs her head*]

Paul: So!—it is Mademoiselle Jeannette who is my laundress! Why did you not let me know of this before?

Jeanne [*embarrassed*]: Because—because—

Paul: Well? [*Silence; aside*] How is this? Dominique told me— [*Aloud*] Let me see the other basket.

Jeanne [*seizes his hand*]: Take care! You will break them!

Paul: Break what?

Jeanne: The eggs.

PAUL [*looks into second basket*]: Fruit, rolls,—yes, even a little pot of cream! And it was for me? [*Looks at* Jeanne; *she nods*] Well, to tell the truth, my child, just at present I cannot pay you for these things. [*Silence*] Ah, I see! The friendship of my servant has reduced me to receiving charity from a peasant! [*Roughly*] Take away all that stuff, Jeanne! I won't have it! Go away!

JEANNE [*weeps*]: If I had known you would be angry, I should not have done it!

PAUL [*aside*]: She weeps! And in my idiotic pride and vanity I have wounded her. Where else have I ever found such devotion? [*Aloud*] No, remain here! Pardon me. I have not been well for some time. Tell me—how long have you been coming here like this every day?

JEANNE: Almost a month.

PAUL: And you never boasted of it! You did it simply, kindly, in the candour and naïveté of your sweet soul! [*Takes her hands*] I can see that your little heart is throbbing fast! You have lovely eyes, my Jeannette. [*Aside*] I never looked at them before, blind fool that I was! [*Aloud*] And these poor little hands! Do you know, if they were covered with fine gloves, more than one fashionable lady would envy you their grace and smallness?

JEANNE: You are very kind, Monsieur!

PAUL [*moves away from* Jeanne; *regards her attentively; aside*]: I must find something to give her. She is charming! Aside from her simple garb, there is something about her—I know not what—of distinction, purity, refinement, that

I never have seen equalled. And the modest grace of her attitude, the brightness of her glance! Can she be — why not? [*Aloud*] Jeannette!

JEANNE: Monsieur!

PAUL: You must be weary of your present lot. Have you never had thoughts and ideas that surprised yourself? Have you never heard in your inmost soul something that whispered to you of a higher destiny? Have you not had a desire to flee — somewhere — far away?

JEANNE: I! Run away! But where? I do not know the way.

PAUL [*makes gesture of annoyance; then aside*]: It is my language that she does not understand. [*Aloud*] Tell me, when you are all by yourself in the fields, what do you think about?

JEANNE: Why — nothing, Monsieur!

PAUL: Try to remember.

JEANNE: Ah, if —! Well, I think of the cows, — most of all of the black one, which follows me like a dog. Then I notice how the grass is growing, and count how many apples there are on the trees.

PAUL: But — at night? Of what do you dream?

JEANNE [*laughs*]: Dream! I don't dream. I sleep too sound.

PAUL: What books have you read?

JEANNE: I don't know how to read — when have I had time to learn? — and I cannot write either. And oh! how sorry I am that I cannot! It would be so useful to me in keeping the accounts.

PAUL [*aside*]: That is enough! This is the end of my fancy! She does not lack in grace and sweet-

ness, but it would take a long time to cultivate her mind. I must give it up. [*Laughs bitterly*] I, who for a moment believed that— [*Stands lost in thought*]

JEANNE: What is the matter, Monsieur Paul? Why do you not speak to me? Just now your voice was as sweet as music. I did not understand what you said, but it pleased me.

PAUL [*brusquely*]: Well, well! [*Calls*] Dominique! I thank you, Jeannette! Later—as soon as I am able—I will show you how grateful I am for your kindness; and when you marry—

SCENE V.

(*Enter* Dominique)

DOMINIQUE: What do you wish, Monsieur?

PAUL [*indicates* Jeanne]: Say good-bye to her, for we are going away.

DOMINIQUE: To travel again?

PAUL: Yes, we are going on a long journey.

DOMINIQUE: But, Monsieur, you seem to forget the state of our wardrobe.

PAUL [*looks about anxiously*]: True! [*Sees a superb fur coat lying on the bed*] But look! Heaven has had a hand in this! This is a warning, a command!

DOMINIQUE: What splendid fur! [*Takes coat on his arm and examines it*] You never told me you had such a coat. With that on your back you can laugh at the thermometer! If I only had one

like it! [*About to lay the coat on the bed, he perceives a second similar garment*] What, another!

PAUL: It is for you! Take it!

DOMINIQUE [*puts on the coat quickly, turns up the collar, and crosses his hands inside the sleeves*]: I shall be warm enough in this. Ha! I look like a Russian ambassador!

PAUL [*taps his foot impatiently*]: Come, come, hasten! I wish to start at once, to follow my purpose until it is attained! Come!

DOMINIQUE: Oh, it won't take me long to get our things together. Just watch me! Good-bye, little sister!

JEANNE [*stifling a sob*]: Good-bye!

PAUL [*with hat on his head and fur coat over his arm, stops at the door on hearing* Jeanne *sob*]: Ah, she has more feeling and sensibility than I thought. Well,—of course, it is on her brother's account! [*Exit* Paul *and* Dominique.

SCENE VI.

JEANNE: They have gone, and this time I don't know where. Very far away, no doubt! I thought for a moment that he was going to offer to take me with them. But no, since he leaves me like this, he must look down upon me. It is because I am not a fine lady, brought up in the city; because I have no trailing gowns, no laces, nor cashmeres, nor jewels, because I am a stupid little peasant, and don't know how to do any-

thing to please him! I cannot dance nor play on the piano; I have no manners and no pretty clothes! Oh, if I only had all those things! [*Goes to fireplace and leans on the mantel-piece*] If I had them perhaps he would love me! How shall I manage to get a pretty gown—only a pretty gown? [King of the Gnomes *glides from the half-open closet*]

KING: Good! She begins by making a most stupid wish! All the better! It is impossible to stop it, but we can arrange matters so that we never shall be recognised! Begin!

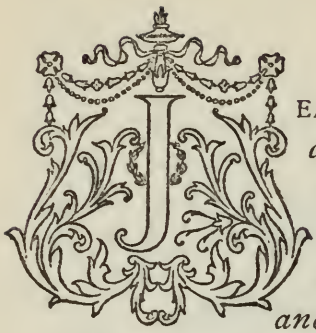
(*The scenery changes slowly in semi-darkness*)

FIFTH TABLEAU.

The Island of the Toilette.

Scene: *At the back of the stage are small hillocks, covered with strips of different-coloured cloths. At* R. *beside a stream composed of milk of almonds, grow, like reeds, slender sticks of cosmetic. A little in front of these a fountain of* eau de Cologne *springs out of a rock made of toilette rouge. In the centre of the stage is a grass-plot, with spangles on the blades of grass; here and there are bushes made of brushes, and stones are represented by cakes of soap of various colours. A tree resembling a tamarisk stands* L. *with clusters of marabout feathers growing on it; another tree, shaped like a palm, bears open fans. There is a small patch of razors; a little in the rear is a tree full of mirrors, another of wigs, a third of powder-puffs, a fourth of combs, and costumes of different styles hang from the branches of larger trees. Bright-coloured flies dart about, and fly in the faces of the women.*

SCENE I.



EANNE [*discovered in the same attitude as when the last scene changed; her head is bent, and one arm rests upon the rock of rouge. After a moment's silence she lifts her head and looks around with amazement*]: Why, how pretty it is here! And how sweet the air is! It smells exactly like *eau de Cologne!* Where does it come from? From this fountain, I do believe! How nice it would be to wash my hands in it! [*Plunges in her arms up to the elbows*] One isn't afraid of spilling this. I will put some on my head, too. [*Sprinkles some drops on the top of her head; they change to diamonds without her perceiving it. She washes her face, and as she leans over the fountain, a branch from the comb-bearing tree behind her bends down and gently arranges her hair in a graceful knot. She rises, surprised, with her hand on her right cheek*] Who touched my head? Go on, go on! I liked that very much! [*The powder-puff tree lowers one of its branches and lightly powders her face*] Oh, how soft and nice that feels! [*Turns her left cheek to the puff*] Again! Oh, but that tickles! That's enough; it makes me want to laugh! Ha! ha! ha! [*The branch returns to its position*] Is that done? I thank you very much! [*Jumps up*] What! No one here? [*Looks at all the strange objects about her and walks to and fro*] What a queer country

this is! Combs growing on trees! And there's a tree with wigs on it! And just see all those clothes and things on the ground, lying there like dead leaves! Oh, what pretty grass, with great dew-drops! No, they are silver spangles! [*Sees herself in one of the mirrors hanging on the tree*] And there — that is I! With diamonds in my hair! I shine like the sun! [*Her gown suddenly loosens itself and flies away in the air*] The wind! Ah! [*Cries out in terror at seeing herself in chemise and petticoat; crosses her hands on her breast*] What is going to happen? I am ashamed! [*A band of drapery wound around one of the hillocks in the rear, now undulates towards* Jeanne *and drapes itself around her in a sort of tunic*] Well, well! I am all dressed now! [*A tree full of bracelets catches her by the arm*] What am I caught upon? What holds me? Ah! let me — [*Draws a bracelet off the tree and clasps it on her arm*] How well that looks against my skin! [*A tree like a mountain ash drops a coral necklace around her neck*] What is this? A necklace! Oh, how pretty I look! How happy I am! I love myself! I should like to kiss myself! But of course this is only a dream. Such things cannot possibly happen. I shall wake up in a minute. But where am I really? What country is this?

CHORUS [*without*]:

'Tis the country of toilettes,
'Tis the land of gay coquettes;
Little packets,
Little rackets!
With us, to charm is all our duty;
E'en the ugly seek for beauty!

JEANNE: I do not comprehend!
CHORUS [*without*]:

'Tis the land of La Toilette!
We triumph, and we never fret!
All is sweet;
All is neat;
Our perfumes are of violet;
Our sighings do not mean regret!

(*Noise of tambourines, flutes, and Chinese music heard*)

JEANNE [*goes up stage and looks off*]: What a crowd of people!
CHORUS [*without*]:

Silence! Silence! Silence!
Make way for the King's advance!
Like the stars, to which we sing,
Comes Couturin, our Fashion's king;
The only being here who can
Rule th' inconstant taste of man!

JEANNE: Oh, they are coming this way! I am afraid! Where shall I hide? [*Runs behind the tree of mirrors*]

SCENE II.

(*Enter* King Couturin, Queen Couturine, Graisse-d'Ours, Prime Minister, and Ladies and Gentlemen of the Court. *The* King *and* Queen *are dressed in the latest fashion, greatly exaggerated.* Graisse-d'Ours *wears a round jacket and a large apron; he has a bristling beard and an uncouth aspect. All the personages of the Court wear emblems of their various occupations. The* King,

carried by four men, is seated on a sort of portable throne, which has plumes waving over his head and mirrors set in the back. The Queen *occupies a lower seat,* R. *The* Prime Minister *has a similar seat,* L. *The porters gently lower the* King's *throne to the ground,* C.)

KING C.: That will do! Hold! Now, since we are installed in the place three times chosen for royal conclaves, with our dear spouse, the lovely Couturine—

QUEEN C. [*looks fondly at* King; *takes his hand and kisses it*]: Always my tender Couturin!

KING C.: And having at our left our Prime Minister, the indispensable Graisse-d'Ours—

GRAISSE-D'OURS: Your Majesty is too kind!

KING C.: And near us also the high dignitaries of our crown: the arch-tailor, the arch-bootmaker, the Prince of Coldcream, the Duke of Caoutchouc, and others—

DIGNITARIES [*bow low*]: At your service, O sovereign!

KING C.: Also the ladies of our Court, of which they are the brightest ornament—

LADIES: Ah, delicious!

KING C.: And having behind us the imbecile people—

CROWD: Long live the King!

KING C.: It is necessary, according to custom, that we now proceed to establish the modes for the season.

ALL [*gesticulate excitedly*]: Yes, yes! Tell us! What colours? How many yards?

KING C.: One moment! First, I must recall to you the great principles.

GRAISSE-D'OURS: Recall them!

KING C. [*to the ladies*]: It is a well-recognised truth, my doves, that naturally you are all hideous!

LADIES [*scandalised*]: Ah! Oh! How abominable!

KING C.: Certainly,—very ugly indeed! You do not doubt for a moment, I hope, the superiority of the artificial over the real. It is art alone, my goddesses, that furnishes you with all your charms. Oh, fear nothing! I am discreet! But you know it is the robe we fall in love with, not the woman; the shoe, not the foot; and if you do not possess silks, laces, velvets, patchouli, kid gloves, sparkling jewels, and colours wherewith to paint your faces, even the wild savages would have nothing to do with you, since they like their women tattooed! [*Sits*]

LADIES: That is a little hard! Rather too severe!

GRAISSE-D'OURS [*rises*]: Besides, dress is a sign of chastity, forms a part of virtue, and may even be considered virtue itself. [*Sits*]

KING C. [*rises*]: Then, the more extraordinary a costume is—that is, the more unnatural, inconvenient, and ugly—the more striking and desirable it is! [*Sits*]

GRAISSE-D'OURS [*rises*]: And *distingué* besides. [*Sits*]

ALL: Ah, *distingué!* That is the principal thing!

KING C.: 'Tis well! Now to work!

ALL: We will look! We will search! [*Silence; then a sound of broken glass*]

KING C.: What is that? [*Looks off* R.; *makes a sign to an Official to seek the cause of the noise. Exit Official*] Ah, the mirror-tree is broken! The mirrors were too ripe, no doubt, and some marauder has shaken the tree.

OFFICIAL [*re-enters*]: We found behind the mirror-tree a strange monster.

KING C.: A monster?

OFFICIAL: Yes, your Majesty, a being green and unfashionable in appearance.

KING C.: Bring her hither!

ALL: What courage!

SCENE III.

(*Enter* Jeanne, *wearing green empire gloves reaching to her elbows and lying in deep wrinkles on her arms; her hair is dressed very high; she wears a yellow shawl over her tunic and carries a reticule in her hand. As she enters* King Couturin *utters a sharp cry and staggers back;* Graisse-d'Ours *supports him. The* Queen, *with a gesture of terror, falls upon her throne; the* Ladies *snatch fans off the fan-tree and hide their faces behind them. General excitement*)

MEN: { Back! / Go away! / Hide yourself!

WOMEN: { What a horror! / Such boldness! / How old-fashioned!

KING C. [*extends his sceptre — a stick covered with curl-papers — to command silence*]: Keep cool your heads, excited by too much curling! Approach, young girl — because you have the appearance of being one, although you possess no

graces. Explain yourself, and justify, if you can, the wearing of that extraordinary costume.

JEANNE: I found it lying there on the ground, by chance, and picked it up—I thought I must; and in rising I broke the mirrors—

KING C.: Never mind them—that is not the important question. [*Rapidly*] But to have disobeyed the laws of our empire, to have shown disregard of the cult of the shoes, the delicacy of the *lingerie*, and the elegance of the coiffure; to muffle yourself up in such frightful old clothes, which carry one back to the days of Corinne and the fashion of egg cameos,—all this deserves torture!

ALL: Yes! Yes! the most terrible!

KING C.: You should be condemned to wear shoes too tight, combs too hard, unlaceable corsets!

ALL: Bravo!

KING C.: To carry a work-bag!

JEANNE: Mercy!

KING C.: And to wear a turban, with bunches of feathers on it!

JEANNE: But I did not know the fashion! I was not able to follow it. Is that a crime?

KING C.: There is none greater, woman! for the fashion, mark you, is the law, fancy, tradition, and progress. It is nothing unless it governs, produces, and overthrows. Colossal idol set up by all the world, it drapes the cradle of the newly-born and ornaments the tomb of the dead; it raises its head to heaven above all philosophies, and penetrates, with the tip of its dainty foot, to eternity itself! Take off those green gloves!

JEANNE [*humbly*]: I ask nothing better. I will do whatever you wish.

QUEEN C.: Ah, have pity on her, great King!

KING C.: Be it so! I pardon you, in consideration of your ignorance. [*To the Officers*] And you, —I desire you to set about attiring her in the very latest mode.

JEANNE [*jumps about joyfully*]: Oh, thanks, thanks! your Majesty! What happiness! Then shall I be pretty and well dressed?

KING C: We hope so!

(*At a sign from* King C. *the Officers of his Court move quickly to* R. *and* L.; *some among the larger trees bearing costumes, others towards the stuffs on the hillocks in the rear; a few among the trees with the marabout plumes, and some towards the comb-tree. They crowd around* Jeanne, *putting various articles of dress upon her. Meanwhile the back drop and side scenes change so that the entire stage represents a large dry-goods and costume shop, full of clerks serving fashionable ladies.* King C. *is seated* R. I. E. *on a small couch; he assumes a meditative pose, and has an open book ready to take notes. The clerks try cloaks, shawls, hats, etc., upon the ladies. Several of them address* King C., *who replies three times*):

Leave me! I am composing!

(Queen C. *serves tea from a small tea-table placed near* King C. *At times the action stops, and there is a general silence. Then the* King, *with a monocle in his eye, passes all the women in review, readjusts details of their costume, lowers or pulls up the fronts of their corsages with an abrupt gesture; then shrugs his shoulders and cries*):

No, not that! That is too old! Something else! Quick!

(Jeanne *is in the centre of every group as it forms. Finally all the* Ladies, *including the* Queen, *who has followed the successive changes, are dressed like* Jeanne *in an extremely rich aud extravagant fashion*)

KING C.: Remain where you are half an hour. That effect is very fine!

(*General satisfaction expressed by sighs from all the* Ladies; *but suddenly* King C. *considers* Jeanne *attentively, then quickly removing some of her costume, he cries*):

No, that does not please me at all — nor that either! Bring something else. Come! Be quick!

(*At last* Jeanne *is attired in a costume of simple and exquisite taste*)

KING C.: Now, my lords and ladies, perfumers and embroiderers, shirt-makers and dressmakers, retire to your respective cabinets; we desire to be alone. Remain here, my Couturine! [*Exit all except* King *and* Queen *and* Jeanne]

KING C.: Well, young woman, the elegant and luxurious toilette you longed for so much — behold yourself in it!

JEANNE: It is true, then. I am not dreaming?

KING C.: Not a doubt of it. No one, thanks to our efforts, will be more fascinating than yourself.

JEANNE: Oh, thanks, thanks again, your Majesty! Perhaps he will love me now!

KING C.: Perhaps! In order to attain to the dignity of the modern woman (a thing difficult to comprehend!), and to become that charming, incomprehensible, and fateful being, begun by God and finished by the poets and the hair-dressers, who took sixty centuries to appear in the form of the perfect Parisienne,—there are many things that you must learn, little girl, of which at present you are ignorant.

JEANNE: What are they?

KING C.: What are they? You do not know how to bow, to smile, to purse up your lips, to give a saucy wink, nor to babble about your trials while taking a melancholy pose on a sofa, like a flower broken in the wind. What would you do, now, if your lover sighed his passion in your ear? What would you say if he should ask, Dost thou love me?

JEANNE: I should answer yes, your Majesty!

KING C.: But one does not say that sort of thing, girl! That word is natural, popular, and therefore indecent.

JEANNE: Alas! What should I say? Teach me!

KING C.: Ah, behold approaching us two types of perfect taste! Come hither!

SCENE IV.

(*Enter two clerks, carrying two life-size manikins, a man and a woman. Both are dressed in the latest fashion. The man has a distinct parting made in the back of the hair on his head, which continues through the fur collar of his coat and ex-*

tends down the back of the rough cloth of the coat itself, as far as the waist-line. His trousers are carefully creased, and he wears an English monocle)

KING C.: Consider these two virtuous manikins, which resemble human beings perfectly. Try to reproduce their movements, if you wish to have fine manners. Remember their discourse, and hereafter, no matter where you may find yourself,—in the country, making a call, at an evening reception, at dinner or at the play,—you may chatter freely about nature, literature, blond-haired children, the ideal life, the turf, and other things. The key, Couturine. [*Winds up the two figures in their chests*] Let us begin. By listening to this one, you will learn what is necessary to say in the country, if there is fine scenery. [*Takes the male manikin and shakes it to the right and the left, as one shakes a clock that has run down. The* Queen *does the same to the other figure*] Go!

THE MAN [*makes little rapid gestures with the right hand, with a brisk lively manner*]: Good-day, my dear!

THE WOMAN [*with the same manner*]: Good-day, my friend! [*They approach each other from opposite sides of the stage, rolling on little wheels. When they meet they shake hands stiffly and sneer at each other*]

THE MAN [*looks around with jerky movements of the head*]: Well! well! Where are we now?

THE WOMAN [*mincingly, and speaking in detached phrases*]: Ah! the delicious country! A most picturesque situation! Pretty little flowers! So

poetic—and useless! Poetic because they are useless—useless because they are poetic!

THE MAN [*peevishly*]: For my part, I find it as commonplace as a cabbage, your beautiful country! As for sentiment, away with it! And elegies, ha! ha! ha! And poetry—ha! ha! ha!—I have gone a long way beyond that sort of thing. Ha! ha! ha!

THE WOMAN [*with many gestures*]: But really, permit me to say, that if one grouped a number of these trees, putting those large ones in the background, and bringing forward that fine old oak, and had some picturesquely dressed peasants in the foreground, and a railway running along at one side, it would be, you must allow, a very attractive subject for one to make a drawing of.

THE MAN [*gallantly*]: As for attractions, I prefer yours, dear lady!

THE WOMAN: Where did you learn to talk like that? At the houses of some of your gay young friends, I have no doubt. Do you know, I should like—if I could do it without anyone being the wiser—to go to one of their houses,—just to see their furniture and how they live!

MAN: I am at your service! [*Aside*] What an imagination! She positively sparkles! [*Aloud*] But, allow me a word of advice with regard to your investments. I will take charge of them.

WOMAN [*quickly*]: And of the reports also?

MAN [*quickly*]: Certainly! I have my note-books.

WOMAN [*quickly*]: Let us not say, then—

QUEEN C. [*stops the machinery*]: That is enough. They will never stop if we let them go on like that.

JEANNE: I was getting rather tired of it.

KING C.: Oh, they were doing very well. But now let us hear them talk about the news of the day. [*Winds springs in another place on the manikins*]

WOMAN [*slowly, with a sad tone*]: Dear! dear! it appears that they have massacred twelve thousand of those poor wretches!

MAN [*sings*]: Broum! broum! broum! What does that matter to us? I don't give a—thought to trouble! Life is short; let us amuse ourselves! Tourlarou! tourlarou!

WOMAN [*gaily*]: You belong to the days of the Regency—when they wore red heels!

MAN [*hand within his waistcoat, speaks gravely*]: Yes, but with liberal ideas! A mingling of the old French aristocracy and American industrialism. What is that?

WOMAN [*speaks quickly in a supplicating tone, offering a handful of small papers*]: They are lottery tickets for my poor!

MAN: Only too happy, Madame! [*Aside*] Pinched! [*Lightly*] And the newest novel—have you read it?

WOMAN [*gushingly*]: Oh, yes! Is it not fine? The author is indeed a great man.

MAN [*naturally*]: Not at all; he is quite an idiot, or so they say.

WOMAN: Do they? Well, of course it must be true, then. I believe you.

MAN [*looks at her tenderly and sighs*]: If you would only believe *all* that I— [*Stops abruptly*]

KING C.: Oh, I forgot to give them the two half-turns.

JEANNE: But those two do not really like each other at all, do they?

KING C. [*winds up the manikins again*]: Yes, that is the way these affairs begin; and after he has said enough impertinent things to her to make her weep, there will be so good an understanding between them that they will be invited to all the best houses. [*During this speech, the manikins have been making tender demonstrations, growing more and more expressive*] No! No! not that! Waltz, now! waltz! [*Starts them off in a waltz, and as they dance* Jeanne *tries to imitate their movements*] That's right! See, his chin is up and his elbow is in the air, while she is as straight as a reed and keeps her face lowered; both cutting angles in space, like a true geometrical figure in a fine humour! Enough! Let them be taken away. And, Couturine, see that the attendants put them in the right boxes. [*Servants carry away the manikins. Exit* Queen Couturine]

SCENE V.

KING C.: There! Now you know enough of society manners to enable you to appear in the polite world.

JEANNE: Ah, it is not the world that troubles me—it is he! Where is he? I long so much to see him.

KING C.: It might be possible for me to grant your wish.

JEANNE [*delighted*]: Oh!

KING C.: On one condition, however.

JEANNE: Name it! Whatever it is, I yield to it. Tell me!

KING C.: It is that you will not allow either himself or his companion to recognise you.

JEANNE: But why?

KING C.: Because he repelled you when you were a peasant — have you forgotten that? Now, listen to me well. You cannot doubt my power, for have I not given you more robes than you ever had pins, and more beautiful pearls than you ever put grains of bran into the hog-trough? Well, I swear to you by that same power that if you betray your name to him, at that very instant, as suddenly as if by a stroke of lightning, you shall die!

JEANNE [*hangs her head, while* King C. *observes her closely; then slowly*]: It matters not under what name or what disguise I meet him, if he will only love me; that is all I wish. Shall we go?

KING C.: That is not necessary. Here he comes now, to make purchases for his long journey. [Dominique's *voice heard without*]

SCENE VI.

(*During the preceding dialogue the scene has gradually changed to an immense shop, filled with articles for travelling: trunks, bags, etc. The back of the stage is occupied by tailors and dressmakers*)

(*Enter* Paul *and* Dominique)

DOMINIQUE: Make way there! We must have two night valises, an alms-bag, and some rugs.

FIRST CLERK: At your service, Monsieur!
SECOND CLERK: Immediately, Monsieur!
THIRD CLERK: Eighth floor, fifteenth shelf!
FOURTH CLERK: No, here!
DOMINIQUE: Ah, I shall lose my head! [Paul *and* Dominique *stand* C.]
JEANNE [R., *hand on her heart*]: It is he!
PAUL [*sees* Jeanne]: What a beautiful girl!
DOMINIQUE: It seems to me she has a look—[*Laughs*] I am a fool! As if it were possible—
PAUL: But I have certainly seen her somewhere. Where? Ah—in my dreams, no doubt!
JEANNE [*quickly*]: He does not know me! Good! It is because this toilette disguises me so well.
KING C.: You certainly have a better chance of pleasing him in it. But do not forget my instructions.
JEANNE: No, no! Oh, I feel myself quite equal to appearing well before him. You shall see.
PAUL [*bows to* Jeanne]: Madame! [*Speaks low*] That so lovely a being should be here, where I may meet her, is no doubt the will of heaven! Can it be, by chance—
JEANNE [*imitates the lady manikin*]: Good-day, good-day, my friend!
PAUL [*aside*]: What familiarity! Perhaps it is a sign, an indication—
JEANNE [*approaches* Paul]: Of sadness, it seems to me. And the cause?
PAUL: I am just about to set out on a long voyage, but a moment ago I asked myself whether I should not do better to—
JEANNE: A journey! That would suit me! The madder one is, the more one laughs! Ha! ha!

ha! Give me your arm. Now let us see! Presto!

PAUL: She is mad!

JEANNE: Listen! I have ninety-two boxes full of frocks, head-ornaments by the dozen, quantities of embroidered handkerchiefs, the finest laces, gloves with twenty-six buttons, and such loves of little shoes! [*Shows her feet*] See my beautiful little shoes!

PAUL: Enough! Enough!

JEANNE: My little châlet of mahogany can, in the twinkling of an eye, transport itself to the most picturesque situations, and with a piano [Paul *makes a gesture of disgust*], a good piano, I play polkas on the mountains. I know how to give excellent imitations — listen!

PAUL: In heaven's name, stop!

JEANNE [*vivaciously*]: The reflection of our elegance will embellish the whole world. We shall give routs in our pagodas; we shall dress up the savages; our face powder shall be wafted on every breeze! I am for *chic — chic* forever! From morning till night we shall make jokes. We shall write our names on all the monuments; we shall visit all the ruins and tell great stories about them! We shall lean over steep precipices. You will not be bored. Thanks to the post nowadays, the newspapers can reach us everywhere. If an occasion should arise for an affair — you know! — a lake of burning petroleum —

PAUL [*recoils*]: Horror!

JEANNE: Come, let us love!

PAUL: Not in that fashion! [*Going*]

JEANNE: Come back!

PAUL: Never! [*Exit.*

DOMINIQUE [*looks about* R. *and* L.]: What! Gone? But she seems to be a very amiable young person! [*Exit.*

SCENE VII.

JEANNE [*throws herself upon the* Queen's *chair*]: Oh, dear! Oh, dear!

KING C.: What is the matter?

JEANNE [*sobs and leans upon* King C.]: Oh, I am horribly unhappy!

(*Chorus of tailors and dressmakers offer consolation as they pursue their occupations*)

JEANNE [*listens to them awhile without seeming to understand; then suddenly*]: Miserable people! you are the cause of my unhappiness, with your foolish tricks. Get away from me, liars and cheats! with your hypocrisies, false sentiment, false hair, padded bosoms, narrow souls! I hate you all! No, no, I will have no more of it! [*Pulls off her fine clothes*] Where is he? I must see him and tell him how I have deceived him. Paul! Paul! [*Runs this way and that, frightened, breathless, upsetting everything in her way. Tailors and dressmakers exit hastily*] Paul! Wait for me! Answer! I am coming! Do you see me? Paul! [*Comes to front of stage, stands near* Couturin, *who is in reality the* King of the Gnomes.] Ah, I have lost him forever!

KING C.: It is your own fault. You did not manage right.

JEANNE: That is true. I should have told him who I am.

KING C.: But then you would have been killed—have you forgotten that?

JEANNE: What should I have done, then? It was I that drove him away. Instead of trying to display myself by those artificial manners that stifle the heart, I should have told him simply who I am, and not have tried to dazzle him with my awkward attempts at elegance. If I had appeared different perhaps I might have pleased him. He would like some one with less rouge on her cheeks, less folly on her lips, and less affectation in her manners; a woman who would win him by modesty and tenderness—a good wife—a simple *bourgeoise.*

KING C.: And do you wish to be a simple *bourgeoise?*

JEANNE: Do you think he would love me then?

KING C.: I think so.

JEANNE: How shall I become one?

KING C.: That is very easy.

JEANNE: Make me one, then!

KING C.: You really wish it?

JEANNE: Yes! Yes! Where shall I find him?

KING C. [*takes her hand with authority, leads her away*]: Come with me! This way! Follow me!

SIXTH TABLEAU.

The Kingdom of the Stock-Pot.

Scene: *The scene represents a public place in the form of a half circle. Several streets lead away from the centre, in such a way that the whole town can be seen at a glance. The houses, all alike, are of a poor and commonplace aspect, painted brown, set off with white. In the middle of the stage, placed upon a tripod over burning coals, is an enormous Stock-Pot, with its contents boiling furiously.*

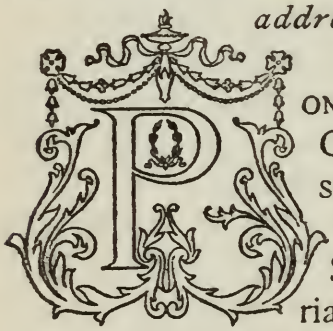
Around the Stock-Pot, arranged in a semi-circle, are large mohogany armchairs, in which sit several grocers and other tradesmen, wearing frock-coats and otter caps. Behind them, on each side of the stage, stand representatives of the different occupations of the town, carrying banners, on which appear the words "Bureaucracy," "Sciences," "Literature," *etc. The professors wear caps and green shades over their eyes; the literary men carry pipes and have inkstands slung upon their hips; the clerks wear great sleeves of black percale and have pens stuck over their ears. All the men wear their beards in collar-like form, and have long coats like tradesmen, and wear tall hats.*

The Grand Pontiff *stands* C. *behind the Stock-Pot; he faces the audience, mounted on a stool so that*

he can look over the heads of the people. Groups of collegians stand R. *and* L. *down front; they wear mortar-board caps; and several play upon accordions. At the windows of the houses sit women in brown gowns and wearing funnel-shaped caps. Cats are sitting on the red-tiled roofs. A dull grey sky.*

Scene I.

(*The curtain rises to the plaintive sound of accordions played by the collegians; the music lasts a moment or two after the curtain is up. Then silence. The boiling of the Pot is audible. The* Grand Pontiff *addresses the people*)



ONTIFF [*holds a skimmer in his hand*]: Citizens and *bourgeois!* On this solemn day, when we have assembled to adore the thrice-blessèd Saint Stock-Pot, emblem of material interests — the dearest of all, so much so that, thanks to you, it has become almost a divinity! — it is my office, as Grand Pontiff of this wise cult, to remind you of your duties and to bring you together, by a common act, to join in the veneration, the love, and the frenzy of adoration we owe to the Stock-Pot!

Your duties, O *Bourgeoisie!* I declare it, have never been neglected; never have you transgressed! You have remained within your houses thinking of nothing but your own affairs, and you have been careful not to go star-gazing, knowing that that would cause you to fall into a

pit! Continue on your safe and narrow path, which eventually will lead you to repose, to riches, and to high consideration. Do not fail to despise whatever seems extraordinary or heroic; above all, have no enthusiasm! Change nothing from its present type, neither your ideas nor your garments, since personal happiness, as well as public safety, is found only in a moderate amount of brains, immutability of customs, and the bubbling of the Stock-Pot! [*Accordions play*] And, now, pillars of the nation, exemplars to all trades, foundation of morality, protectors of the arts — the grocers! [Grocers *rise and come forward*] Do you swear that you will always put chiccory in the coffee?

GROCERS: Yes!

PONTIFF: And that you will never leave your counters, except, of course, to go to the door to drive away idlers; and that, finally, you will mingle your ideas with those of everyone else, by all sorts of means, alliances, and propaganda, so that your principles shall prevail, and that you may remain, as you are now, the kings of humanity, and dominators of the world?

GROCERS [*with hands extended towards the Stock-Pot*]: We swear it!

PONTIFF: Now you, O clerks!

CLERKS: Present!

PONTIFF: Do you resolve to work as little as possible, and to think of nothing but your own promotion?

CLERKS: We do!

PONTIFF: Do you swear always to burn as much fuel as you can in your offices, to be uncivil, to curse

your chiefs and to complain of your lot; to spend a hundred crowns' worth of writing on business worth only twenty-five centimes, of which you will delay the settlement fifteen years?

CLERKS: We swear it!

PONTIFF: Messieurs the Professors, light of the country! your turn! [Professors *advance, with stooping shoulders and senile trembling*]

PONTIFF [*in a familiar tone*]: You bind yourselves, do you not, as in the past, to make only innocent and harmless researches, that will trouble no one's peace of mind?

PROFESSORS [*raise their hands*]: Yes! yes! Have no fear! We swear it!

PONTIFF: That is sufficient! Come forward, you, with your charming talents that give us happy evenings at home. As art was made to amuse, you shall make us laugh. Advance!

(*The* Comic Poets *extend their arms towards the Stock-Pot, crying*):

Cocorico! [*Sneering laughter from the spectators*]

PONTIFF [*smiles upon the* Grocers, *who surround him*]: A little eccentric in manner, but their intentions are pure! [*Knocks on the Stock-Pot to obtain silence*] A last word to our youth, to those in the springtime of life! [*Makes a sign to the* Collegians, *who approach with accordions under their arms*] Approach, sweet youths! Young men, hope of our people, you are about to enter upon the age of the passions. Take care! it is as if you played with gunpowder; the least spark fall-

ing upon your heads may blow them off. True, we have been careful to remove all torches from your pathway, but what matters that? It is none the less necessary to guard against the ardour of the blood and of the imagination. They produce only crime and folly. I should say, rather, utilise your vices; employ your bad instincts to advantage. For instance, let those who know how to win at play bring home their gains and invest them wisely. Amuse yourselves discreetly —and economically! Choose a good profession, and do not stay out later than ten o'clock at night! That is the whole secret of success. Do you swear to observe it?

COLLEGIANS: We swear it! [*Return to their places*]

PONTIFF: I am moved, gentlemen! So much good sense in these days touches me deeply, and if the festival were not ended I should succumb to my emotion. It is ended, however, for it is not necessary to exact vows from *you* [*Speaks to the women at the windows*], cause and guardians of our felicity, our spouses, housewives, and little mistresses of the Stock-Pot! It is because of your care that the Pot simmers! Persevere, then, in your two cherished occupations, first: mend your husbands' stockings, and, second, be always on your guard against the temptation to indulge in broad jokes. Fix your minds on those two rules, continually, exclusively. In short, do not forget that the most becoming attitude for a woman, her ideal position, if I may dare thus to express it, is a half-kneeling pose, holding a skimmer in one hand, and having a woolen stocking slipped upon her left arm; her back turned upon Cupid,

and her head half lost in the steam of the Stock-Pot!

And you, O cats, inconstant quadrupeds, Bohemians of the roofs! If you employed not your time and the strength of your jaws in catching mice, we should muzzle you and impale you on a rod; but nature has created you to be useful to us. However, if you will stay at home and serve us zealously, we will leave some drops of soup for you in the bottom of the plate!

And thou, O Sun! Mayst thou, shining with gentle moderation, transform thyself into a gigantic mass of candles, in order to economise light; and may thy rays cause to fall into the depths of the sea a shower of fat, which shall heat itself to a pleasant tepidity, so that the waters of the entire globe shall be turned into an immense Stock-Pot!

ALL: Long live the Stock-Pot! [*As they remove their hats, their heads are seen to be shaped like pieces of loaf sugar*]

WOMEN [*at the windows*]: How handsome our husbands are!

(*Representatives of the various occupations that have not been named now crowd around the Stock-Pot, and the* Grand Pontiff, *describing a mysterious circle in the air, sprinkles them with his skimmer. Then the meeting breaks up informally; the men leave their places and walk about, and all talk animatedly*)

THE BOURGEOIS: A delightful occasion! A remarkable discourse! And what charming music! We have certainly made great progress in the fine arts,—there's no denying it!

(*The confusion gradually grows less, and the men stand with their eyes fixed upon clocks placed over the door of each house. All the hands point to 5.55. The men wait in silence, their heads raised, and the instant six o'clock strikes, all cry*):

Six o'clock! Time for dinner!

[*Exeunt into houses.*

Scene II.

(*The stage is clear. After a moment a sound of loud kisses is heard; then the shoving of chairs; then a clattering of knives and forks and dishes*)

Voices: Ah, that is good! [*Clatter of knives and forks*]

Voices: This is better than one finds it at a restaurant. [*Popping of corks heard*]

Voices: We are between the dessert and the cheese! [*Laughter*]

Man: Give us a glass of liqueur, will you?

Woman: But you will make yourself ill, my darling!

Man: Just a little for my stomach's sake, and besides, is it not the custom?

(*Sound of moving chairs heard; then all the* Bourgeois *appear at their windows; they hold out their hands and say*):

It is very warm!

Women [*appear at windows*]: Yes, but there is a cool breeze.

BOURGEOIS: True! [*They lean out of windows and tap barometers that are nailed up outside of each house*] How is the weather now? [*After a moment*] Yes it will be safe to sit out of doors.

(*The windows close, and all the Bourgeois come out of their houses and sit in chairs before their doors; each family has one small boy, dressed like a Turk, and a little girl in Swiss costume*)

BOURGEOIS: It is very pleasant out here.

(*Women come out and sit, with knitting. Men read newspapers.* Jeanne *appears, dressed in an exaggerated bourgeoise costume. She sits in front of a house* R. I. E.)

SCENE III.

(*As soon as* Jeanne *is seated, the* King of the Gnomes, *having removed some parts of his costume as the* Grand Pontiff, *appears behind her and leans over her shoulder*)

KING: You see! Everything yields to me, everything serves me! I had only to show myself here to be elected burgomaster of the town and pontiff of their religion. [*Aside*] Nothing easier! It is in mediocrity that the spirit of evil triumphs!

JEANNE [*sighs*]: But think how many days I have been seeking him, how long I have waited! Do you think he will come?

KING: I am quite sure of it. Be patient!
MOTHERS: There, run along, my angels! This is the hour for children to play and amuse themselves!

(*Girls and boys jump down from the doorways and run to* C., *join hands and dance around the Stock-Pot, singing a stanza in imitation of the Song of the Spartans*):

My grandfather was a beast;
My father still more wild!
I am worse than they,
And worse will be my child!

(*Some of the children lose their hats in dancing, and their heads are seen to be pointed*)

JEANNE: They are very pretty, those children. Happy mothers!
FIRST WOMAN [*sitting near* Jeanne]: No doubt! You are very frank, Mademoiselle; but my child, although younger than they, is most promising. [*Calls*] Nurse!
SECOND WOMAN: And my two angels also! [*Calls*] Nurse!

(*Several nurses appear, dandling plump babies in their arms. Mothers crowd around them, each trying to show off her own child*)

FIRST WOMAN: Throw a kiss to the pretty young lady and the nice gentleman!
SECOND WOMAN [*pulls up baby's clothes*]: Just look at those legs!
THIRD WOMAN [*takes cap off baby's head*]: Look at his head!

ALL THE MOTHERS: Mine is far more beautiful! the most beautiful in the world! [*They pull caps off all the babies' heads, which are seen to be extraordinarily pointed*]

KING [*examines the heads*]: Very fine! Better than their fathers'. This generation distinguishes itself phrenologically!

ALL THE MOTHERS: Recite your little fable! Sing your pretty song! Smile for the lady! Ah, how sweet she is! He shall have some candy!

(*The children throw kisses to* Jeanne *and recite little verses in a rapid mumble, while the Mothers all talk at once, the babies cry, and the nurses sing to them. Outside a murmur of men's voices grows louder each moment.* Paul *and* Dominique *appear* C. D. *The children, alarmed, run into the houses, followed by nurses carrying the babies. Many of the Bourgeois and their wives go into their houses; others remain, crying*):

Go away, rascals! Brigands! Strange beings!

SCENE IV.

(**Paul** *and* Dominique, *in disordered travelling costumes, come down,* C.)

DOMINIQUE: What ails you, idiots? Are you making all this fuss about our appearance? [*Exit all the Bourgeois, making signs of mutual intelligence*]

JEANNE [*rushes to* Paul]: Paul! At last!

KING [*aside to* Jeanne]: Dissimulate! Remember to assume the utmost simplicity!

DOMINIQUE: It seems to me these folks have a very inhospitable way with them.

PAUL: Never mind! Perhaps I shall find here the well-beloved, still unknown to me!

DOMINIQUE: Ah, talking about her again! Now, really, what do you wish? What are you seeking? What object have you in view? Ever since we began this crazy journey you have talked of nothing but "the unknown."

PAUL: Why, the object is easily understood. Somewhere I am to meet a young girl with a pure soul and of absolute disinterestedness. I shall recognise her; we shall love, and, strong in her love, I shall take possession of the Castle of Hearts!

DOMINIQUE: Very fine! A girl who doesn't exist and an imaginary castle! Come, now, what is supposed to be in this wonderful castle? Treasures?

PAUL: No, but a fortune so extraordinary that you could not even conceive of it!

DOMINIQUE: Oho! that remains to be seen. Now, Monsieur, I have a good idea. Let us go back to Paris—

PAUL: Leave me here for awhile, Dominique. I am overcome with weariness and discouragement. And besides, I find in this village, in spite of its common and vulgar appearance, something indescribably interesting.

JEANNE [*offers* Paul *a chair near her*]: Yes, Monsieur, remain here! [Paul *hesitates*] Will you not sit down?

PAUL [*aside*]: She is very graceful, upon my word! [*Looks at* Jeanne, *who lowers her eyes*] What charming modesty! [*Silence. They look at each other*]

JEANNE: It is easy to see that you are a stranger here, Monsieur. That eccentric costume— [*With slight disdain*]

PAUL: Good heavens! Mademoiselle, in travelling surely one need not dress with the most extreme care!

JEANNE [*drily*]: All the same, one ought to follow the custom.

DOMINIQUE [*aside*]: What a bore she is! It must be great fun to talk to her! I should like to get out and see whether I can find anything more amusing. [*Aloud*] Will you excuse me for a short time, Monsieur?

PAUL: Yes. But return soon.

SCENE V.

(The King of the Gnomes *hides behind the* Pontiff's *throne, which has been wheeled down to* R. I. E. *near* Jeanne)

JEANNE: You do not wish to go with him? All the better!

PAUL [*aside*]: She softens a little!

JEANNE: To remain with us— [*Silence*]

PAUL: Well?

JEANNE [*timidly*]: You must—oh, do not be angry! —do nothing, say nothing, and even think nothing, that differs from the actions, the words, and the ideas of everyone else.

PAUL: Indeed! And why? Where is the harm in obeying the voice of the heart, if one is sure that

its promptings are worthy? As for myself, whatever comes, I despise evil. I shun that which is ugly and reverence that which is good!

JEANNE: Ah, that is right!

KING [*behind* Jeanne]: Beware!

JEANNE: But for a man weary of the world, it would be pleasant and restful to live in one of these houses. [Paul *looks around with an expression of disgust*] Oh, they are much nicer inside! And if you only knew how each wife loves her husband! She surrounds him with tender care, cooks for him, embroiders his slippers, nurses him, pets him, helps him to dress, and even puts on his coat for him. [*Offers* Paul *a coat like those worn by the Bourgeois*] Put this on!

PAUL [*surprised*]: What for?

JEANNE: You will be so comfortable in it. I beg you!

PAUL [*puts on the coat; speaks aside*]: She is rather stupid, although charming in a way. [*Aloud*] No doubt this quiet life has its advantages. But do you not believe—you, whose voice is as sweet as the song of a bird, and whose glance is as cordial as the clasp of a hand!—do you not feel that it is possible to find a more complete union than any you have seen, —a felicity of such warmth and power that its effect would spread like the sun's rays? The enchantment that one being possesses for another in such a love, amid all the gloom and sadness of the world, makes life a continual poem; the more one loves the better it makes him; the mere habit of tenderness enables him to understand all persons better; and that which

appears to be virtue is only a proof of the purest happiness!

JEANNE: Yes, yes! I understand you!

KING [*behind her*]: Unhappy one! You are lost!

JEANNE [*troubled*]: That is—I comprehend your meaning, but—without banishing a certain ideal, one might find a way to live a quiet, peaceful life and yet not concern oneself too much with the affairs of others. Why should we waste the best of ourselves in sympathy, tender emotions, and taking trouble for other persons, instead of keeping all these fine sentiments for ourselves?

KING [*aside*]: Bravo!

JEANNE: If others are stronger than we, let us submit to them, so that they will respect us and serve us. Oh, it is very easy,—with certain exterior concessions, and provided one shows nothing extravagant in his person or his speech!

(*Enter a* Barber, *carrying the utensils of his trade*)

PAUL [*surprised*]: What do you wish here?

BARBER [*in a hollow voice*]: To cut your beard in the form of a collar, as everyone else wears his.

PAUL: Well, that is a cool proposition!

JEANNE: Oh, let him do it—to please me! [*Fastens a towel around his neck. Barber cuts* Paul's *beard*] A little patience! it's almost finished. One more cut! Ah, how well that becomes you, and what delightful evenings we shall have this winter, in the little parlour, with the Persian curtains and the family photographs! We shall sit beside the fire, near my piano! In the faubourg there are pretty gardens with little arbours made of green sticks. We will go there on Sundays,

and, walking arm-in-arm, we will talk of our happiness and look over the wall at the vegetables growing!

(*The* Barber *finishes his work and departs*)

PAUL [*aside*]: Perhaps she is right. There is good sense, after all, in what she says. Besides, if she were once my wife, I should educate her.

JEANNE: Now turn your head about so that I can see you. Ah, charming! Thank you! I am very much pleased! And you will never leave me now? [*Takes his hand*]

PAUL: Ah, my little dear! No, no! I swear it!

JEANNE [*delighted, looks at him*]: Can it be possible? But yes! You lack nothing now!

KING [*holds a high hat towards* Paul]: Except this!

JEANNE [*puts the hat on* Paul's *head*]: Oh, yes, that! Now! Come! Come! everyone! It is finished!

(*The* Bourgeois *rush on, followed by* Dominique)

SCENE VI.

BOURGEOIS [*applaud and embrace* Paul]: Good! Good! Very becoming! Our congratulations! My dear fellow-citizen, I am delighted!

PAUL: One moment! Permit me! What does this mean? A short time ago you wished to stone me, and now—

BOURGEOIS: Well, you see, you have now become one of us.

KING [*presents a mirror*]: There! Look at yourself!

PAUL [*looks at himself for some moments in the mirror; then, as if awakening from a dream*]: What! The collar-like beard, the ugly tall hat of a *bourgeois* on *me!* [*Throws the hat on the ground. Cries of indignation from the* Bourgeois] And a coat like that! [*Tears off the coat*] I never shall wear such garments—clothes for idiots! Never! never! [*Tramples on the hat and coat*]

JEANNE: Unhappy one! Cease!

BOURGEOIS: He is mad! Beware of him!

JEANNE [*distractedly*]: Calm him! Soothe him! Oh! what shall I do?

A VOICE: Seize him, some one! The soup! Put him to the test of the soup!

JEANNE: Bring him here, quick! There! that's right! Take it, my friend!

(Bourgeois *surround* Paul, *take him up by the arms and legs and bring him to the Stock-Pot. Some one hands a cup of soup to* Jeanne; *she presents it at* Paul's *lips.*)

JEANNE: Drink this slowly!

PAUL [*dashes away the cup with the back of his hand*]: I will have none of your stuff!

ALL: Sacrilege! sacrilege! To jail with him! Put him into the strongest cell! [*Men rush at* Paul *and strike him with their fists*]

PAUL: Yes, beat me, if you like. I like your blows better than your applause, and your cruelty more than your favours! I despise you, with your hearts of slaves, heads like sugar-loaves, gro-

tesque costume, hideous houses, your mean occupations and your beast-like ferocity —

ALL: He is mad! He raves!

PAUL [*raises his hands, which have been chained*]: Ah, if I could only summon a bolt from heaven to exterminate you!

MEN: He becomes dangerous! Bring a gag! [*They gag* Paul]

A MAN: And his servant!

ALL: Yes, yes! his servant!

DOMINIQUE [*comes forward with the coat and hat, which he has picked up*]: But I have the coat and I have the hat, and I ask nothing better than to be allowed to wear them.

BOURGEOIS: That will do no good. As a matter of principle —

DOMINIQUE: I will take the soup!

BOURGEOIS: Silence!

DOMINIQUE: In fact, I need it!

BOURGEOIS: Insolent! [*They gag* Dominique, *and drag him and* Paul *to a prison* R. I. E. *and throw them in. They can be seen through the barred windows*]

ALL [*with sighs of relief*]: Now the proper thing to do is to moralise with them and catechise them a little!

(*Enter the* Grand Pontiff)

PONTIFF: That is *my* business! That is a part of my sacerdotal duty. Let us begin. Unfortunate man! you are accused of scorning the frock-coat and the Stock-Pot!

BOURGEOIS [*sneering*]: These fine gentlemen did not like them!

PONTIFF: Of harbouring disdain for trade, of having unusual sentiments, ideas, words, manners and customs,—in one word, of eccentricity!

A VOICE: The guillotine!

PONTIFF: No, gentlemen! thank heaven, our ways are not so severe! We demand, wretched men! only that you be chastened by confinement, purified by remorse, and perhaps later, by good conduct, you will re-establish yourselves in our esteem. The soup you rejected, you shall be forced to swallow, only it will be stronger; the walls of your cell shall be embellished by moral inscriptions, and will form, instead of the study of spiders, your sole distraction! [Paul *and* Dominique *become excited and try to thrust their arms through the bars*] I have not finished! The just anger of the people wills, since at present you can do no more harm, that I should lecture you on many points. Then they will make certain experiments upon you!

(*A slight rattling sound is heard, and then the clocks strike eight. At the first stroke all the* Bourgeois *draw cotton night-caps from their pockets and put them on their heads. The* Pontiff *does the same*)

PONTIFF: It is now time to go to bed! Until tomorrow! [*Exit* Bourgeois *into various houses.*

SCENE VII.

JEANNE [*to* King of the Gnomes, *as the* Pontiff]: Save him! save him! or I shall go myself—

KING: Beware!

JEANNE: But it is your fault that he is there and that I have lost him again.

KING: No, it is your own fault.

JEANNE: Not content with having deceived me you—

KING: I did not deceive you! I gave you all that you asked, but it is impossible for me to grant his wishes as well as yours: you must choose more wisely. At your first request, I gave you worldly luxuries and the foolish fripperies that belong to the gay world; at the second, I granted you the simplicity of the *bourgeois*, with its accompaniment of ugly commonplaces. Now, of what do you complain? What do you really wish?

JEANNE [*after a silence*]: I will tell you! I could see, when he was surrounded by those men that put chains upon him, that the desire of his heart was revealed in his proud words. You ask what I wish! Listen! I would possess a power so great that it shall dazzle him. I ask for a palace of basalt with steps of crystal, where he shall sit beside me upon a throne of gold, so that he may look out over the heads of all the people, my slaves, who shall prostrate themselves in the dust before him!

KING: Very good! Excellent! But not so loud, my princess, for fear of disturbing these worthy people! [*Draws a cotton cap from his pocket and puts it on his head, and takes off his blue spectacles. His face is very ugly; he has yellow teeth and great eyes which run back almost to his ears, and his red side-whiskers look like wings. A button on top of the cap glows like fire. He disappears with* Jeanne]

Scene VIII.

(*The Stock-Pot, the handles of which have been transformed into wings, rises into the air and turns itself over, and while it increases in size so that it appears to hover over the whole town, the vegetables,—carrots, turnips, and leeks—that come out of it, remain suspended in the air and turn into luminous constellations. As soon as the darkness is complete, a sound of loud snoring is heard issuing from the houses. There is a noise of something breaking; then from the prison steal two figures, pressing close to the wall and walking softly.* Paul *appears first, then* Dominique, *with the tall hat and frock-coat, and carrying his shoes under his arm. He is terrified at sight of the vegetable-constellations. The snoring continues as the curtain slowly falls*)

SEVENTH TABLEAU.

The Kingdom of Pipempohé.

Scene: *A vast hall, of Indo-Moorish architecture, having a practicable gallery across the back, and three arches beneath it, sustained by columns. The middle arch, used as an entrance, shows a low flight of steps, by which entrance is made upon the scene.*

The ceiling has beams of blue-and-gold enamel. The columns are of ebony incrusted with mother-of-pearl, and the two side arches have hanging blinds of gilded bamboo.

In the plinth that supports the gallery, as well as in the walls, blue and red lozenges are set.

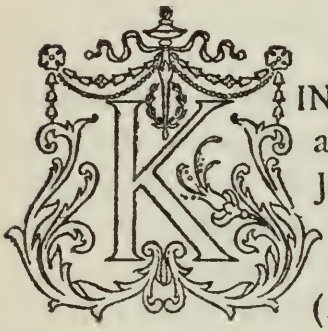
A large cashmere portière hangs R. *At* L., *seated on a throne ornamented with gold and surmounted by a baldaquin with waving plumes, sits* Jeanne, *dressed as a queen and sparkling with jewels. She assumes an imperious attitude.*

Near her stands her Prime Minister (*the* King of the Gnomes). *Behind her stand negro slaves, waving fans made of peacock feathers, and in front of her bearded dwarfs, attired in red, are squatting upon their heels on the steps of the throne. The two at the foot of the throne blow perfume out of bottles larger than themselves.*

In the centre of the stage Bayadères are performing a dance as the curtain rises. At the back, two giants, robed in black, stand in front of the gilded bamboo blinds.

The murmur of a languorous melody is heard, clouds of perfume rise slowly; the sunlight falling through the windows, sheds an amber light upon the scene.

SCENE I.



ING [*whispers to* Jeanne]: And now are you happy?

JEANNE [*smiles*]: I hope to be so soon.

(*Bayadères finish their dance, and before beginning another, they bow before the throne*)

KING: You see, all goes well. Everyone takes you for the Queen. She died last night, and the error of the people will continue. You have only to hold him when he comes, but do not let him recognise you; remember the terrible consequences!

JEANNE: I know! Thanks, good Fairy, for having pity on my love; and as you are now my Prime Minister, of course you will not leave me any more.

KING: If sometimes I am compelled to do so, a blast upon this will recall me. [*Hands* Jeanne *a golden whistle on a cord, which he takes from his neck. She puts it around her own neck. The cashmere portière opposite the throne half opens, and a hideous* Dwarf *enters. He wears an*

aigrette in his turban, long moustaches, and carries an ivory bâton in his hand. He leads a procession of six Giants, loaded with arms. As the Dwarf *advances to bow before the throne, the Giants form a line against the wall and stand motionless*]

Scene II.

Dwarf [*bows to* Jeanne *and returns to the Giants*]: Higher, stupids, higher! Chin raised! Who ever saw such drilling? [*Giants tremble with fear before him*] Make way for the messenger of the sovereign! [*The Giants make way* R. *and* L. *Enter an* Officer *in a pink turban, with trousers of white muslin, a blue waistcoat, and a large sword hanging at his side*]

Officer [*salutes profoundly*]: Acting upon the command of your Sublime Majesty, we have just cut into small pieces the twelve wretches who failed to prostrate themselves quickly enough last night, when your Majesty passed the silk-bazaar upon your Majesty's white elephant.

Jeanne: My orders! Cut into pieces — my elephants!

Officer [*smiles*]: I do not speak of your thrice divine white elephant, your Majesty,— only of the men.

Jeanne: Wretch! [Officer *stares at* Jeanne *astonished*]

King [*aside*]: You will betray yourself by showing this indignation. Think only of him you love, and reward this good servitor for his faithfulness.

Jeanne: I never could do it!

King: But you must!

JEANNE [*hesitates*]: Very well. We are satisfied. Go! [*Exit* Officer] Ah, heavens! who would have thought that I should have had the courage?

KING [*aside*]: She begins well!

(*Enter the* Chancellor, *dressed in a long robe bordered with fur, and an astrachan cap; he carries an inkstand in his girdle and long strips of paper in his left hand*)

CHANCELLOR: I venture to come within your powerful rays, light of the stars! to call attention to the fact that this document lacks your Majesty's august seal.

JEANNE: What is it?

CHANCELLOR: No doubt your Majesty recalls the insolence of the man who dared to weep in your presence, under the pretext that he was dying of hunger?

JEANNE: No — I do not remember!

KING [*aside*]: On the contrary, you do remember quite well!

CHANCELLOR: This is an order for his immediate execution.

JEANNE: Horror! Give me that paper!

KING [*to* Chancellor]: Give it rather to me, — I will take charge of the matter. Go, all of you!

JEANNE: Yes, go! go!

(*Exit* Dwarf, *followed by the six Giants, whose heads touch the top of the gallery arches; also the Bayadères, and the Dwarfs from the steps of the throne, except one who remains half hidden*)

KING [*points to the two Giants standing in front of the arches*]: They may remain, being mutes.

Scene III.

Jeanne [*descends from throne*]: For what reason do you demand this man's death?

King: I? Oh, I haven't the least notion!

Jeanne: Then, as I have the right to pardon him—

King: Pardon him! If you do that the people will not believe that you are the Queen.

Jeanne: To be killed because he wept—what a crime! The former Queen was very cruel, then?

King: She was strong. Imitate her!

Jeanne: But it is impossible for me—

King: Will you ruin yourself for a mere scruple, then, and lose this power so long hoped for, when you should show yourself stronger than ever?

Jeanne: What do you mean?

King: I mean that soon—almost immediately, perhaps—you will be called upon to save from mortal peril your brother and your lover!

Jeanne [*after a silence*]: And do you believe that the signing of this paper—

King: It is only a matter of blowing upon that whistle and pressing your thumb upon this red seal. [*Presents the paper*]

Jeanne: Oh, no! It is too horrible!

King: But suppose the people revolt and drive you away? I have no power over the multitude. They are accustomed to witnessing tortures every day. You will deprive them of their amusement and they will doubt their Queen. [*Cries without*] Do you hear that?

Jeanne [*listens*]: It is true!

VOICES [*without*]: Vengeance! Death!
KING [*to the Giants*]: Raise the blinds!

(*The Giants push up the bamboo blinds, disclosing a view of a city of Oriental aspect, with minarets and cupolas*)

JEANNE [*slowly mounts the steps and leans out to look*]: What a crowd! And they all have picks, hatchets, and swords! They are beating upon the gates of the palace!
KING: Hasten, then, unhappy one! to save those you love!
JEANNE: Give it to me! [*Thrusts away the paper*] No! No!
KING: At least reserve the power to have him executed some time, if it be only one day hence, and let this torture show—
JEANNE [*overcome*]: Let it take place, then, when I shall be no more!
KING [*servilely*]: To-morrow, if you wish. Your wishes are our commands, your Majesty! Here it is!
JEANNE [*presses the seal quickly*]: Yes, to-morrow!
KING [*hands paper to Dwarf*]: Run! [*Dwarf runs off* R., *laughing*] He is in a mad mood, that buffoon!
JEANNE [*wrings her hands*]: Heaven have mercy on me! If I had only known that—
KING [*aside*]: She is ours! First she was coquettish, then stupid, now cruel! [*Cries of joy without*] Your people thank you, O Queen!
JEANNE: I hear a sound of many footsteps.
VOICES [*nearer*]: Death! Death!

KING [*mounts steps and looks out from the balcony*]: They are coming here, to assist at the execution, and to bask in your thrice-blessed presence! [*They come down stage*]

(*From the gallery enters, first, the* Chief Dwarf; *behind him come several negroes bearing on their shoulders an enormous chain, which binds* Paul *and* Dominique *together. A throng follows them. They descend the steps and scatter* R. *and* L. *leaving* Paul *and* Dominique *at* R. I. E. *They are pale and haggard. The* King of the Gnomes *stands at the foot of the lowest step looking at* Paul *and* Dominique, *and the Giants resume their former position*)

SCENE IV.

JEANNE [*sees* Paul]: He! [*Strives to command herself; mounts the throne, and when* Paul *is before her, she addresses the* Dwarf] These prisoners are in chains. Why?

DWARF: They crossed the borders and entered your kingdom, your Majesty.

JEANNE: Well?

KING [*approaches* Jeanne *from* L.]: Is not that the greatest of crimes, O light of the stars?

JEANNE [*comprehends*]: Of course — certainly! You have done well, General, and your blacks also,— and you, my people! But because of their excessive audacity, we desire to interrogate the two guilty ones — alone [*to the* King], without even our Prime Minister! [King *bows*] If we need

you [*shows whistle*] we will call you, you understand. [King *disappears suddenly inside of the throne, through a trap-door at the back*] What! Is he gone already? I did not see him go. All the better — he would have importuned us.

Scene V.

Jeanne [*after the multitude has departed*]: Although I am Queen, I am compelled to submit to the laws of the country. It was in obedience to those laws that my people arrested you. I am obliged to give them a reason for what I do, but — I pardon you! You are free!

Dominique: What a good woman!

Jeanne: I wish first to remove your chains, but no one must know it except my Prime Minister. Where is he? Ah, the whistle! [*Blows whistle; instantly the* King *appears beside her*]

Dominique [*aside*]: Where did he come from? I don't like this abrupt style of entering. Just when our affairs were going on so well, too!

Paul [*looks at the* King]: This is strange! I have already seen this man somewhere. At the ball? No, is it not the man of the wine-shop? There is some trap here!

Scene VI.

Jeanne [*to* King]: Take away those chains! [*Aside*] I need the secret — you will excuse me!

KING: Without doubt! [*Aloud*] Immediately, your Majesty! [*Advances gravely towards the prisoners, and without effort, by merely touching the chains, he breaks them, ring by ring, with his fingers. The links fall to the floor with a crash*]

DOMINIQUE: Ye gods! What a fist!

PAUL: It *is* he! [*Leans over to study the* King's *face; the* King *disappears*]

JEANNE [*aside*]: He is as discreet as he is devoted, that good Fairy! [*Aloud*] Now, you are free; the gates are open to you. Have you nothing to say to me?

PAUL [*coldly*]: We offer our thanks!

JEANNE [*piqued*]: Is that all?

PAUL [*slowly*]: What more do you wish? How do I know what motive—

DOMINIQUE [*aside*]: What imprudence! [*Aloud*] Ah, your Majesty, Queen, goddess, reflection of the moon! our hearts swell with gratitude!

JEANNE: Good! Would it not be better, rather than to continue on your dangerous way, to remain here in my kingdom?

DOMINIQUE: Certainly! For my part, I am willing.

JEANNE [*aside*]: He does not reply! [*Aloud*] I tell you, that in this city, at my Court, I will give you some high function.

PAUL [*brusquely*]: I refuse!

JEANNE: Even that of Prime Minister?

PAUL: Yes!

JEANNE [*aside*]: What does he wish, then? [*Points to the middle arch at the back*] Behold the capital of my kingdom, the great city of Pipempohé. It is twenty-five leagues in circumference, has three million inhabitants, six rivers,

palaces of gold, houses of silver, and shops so numerous that a guide is necessary to conduct one through their maze of columns. I give it to you!

PAUL: I do not need it!

JEANNE: Ah, what pride! [*To the Giant standing at blind* R.] Raise the curtain!

(*The Giant raises the gilt blind; a bay filled with vessels is seen in the distance, and in the rear a forest*)

JEANNE: You shall have my port, my navy, my vessels, the whole sea, with its islands and its yet undiscovered countries.

PAUL: To what purpose?

JEANNE: You will accept this, I hope! [*To the Giant at* L. *arch*] Raise the curtain!

(*The Giant raises the blind and discloses a view of forbidding rocks, in the midst of which is a large block of dazzling whiteness*)

JEANNE: That mountain is filled with diamonds. The magicians at my service shall procure them, and I will give you elephants with which to bring them away.

PAUL: That would be somewhat too heavy a burden, your Majesty!

JEANNE: Is it my throne that you desire? I can give you the right to occupy it beside me! [*Tenderly*] I would even descend from it, that you might occupy it alone, if you wish.

PAUL: My place is far distant from here. I have a great task to perform.

JEANNE: Ah! And what if I prevent you?

PAUL: It is something quite above your power to control.

JEANNE: But if I force you to remain here?

PAUL: I should still have the liberty to hate you!

JEANNE: Hate me! And you refuse my throne? What is this extraordinary mission?

PAUL: No one may know that.

JEANNE: But I!

PAUL: You less than any other.

JEANNE: What audacity!

DOMINIQUE [*aside*]: Master! master! No more of such folly! With a single word she can order our heads off! If you do not want her throne, at least refuse it politely! Be calm! Be astute!

PAUL: I fear nothing! The nearer I approach to the end of my quest, the clearer my mind becomes. And you, who now appear to me as a queen, surrounded by awe-inspiring grandeur, you are the same woman that tried to attract me with absurd affectations of elegance, and later attempted to win me with the charms of a vulgar happiness! I know you!

JEANNE [*aside*]: Unhappy that I am! Now he execrates me!

PAUL: Woman, you are—admit it!—only the instrument of evil spirits. But I shall not succumb to your power any more than I have been vanquished by other temptations. Accumulate obstacles, if you wish! My will is stronger than your citadel, and prouder than your armies!

JEANNE: Insensate fool! [*Calls*] Send my negro slaves! [*Enter four negroes, armed with daggers.* Jeanne *addresses the first two*] Approach.

you two! Draw your daggers! [*They draw their daggers and approach* Paul *and* Dominique. Paul *is perfectly cool, but* Dominique *is almost fainting with terror.* Jeanne *speaks coldly*] Kill yourselves! [*The two negroes tremble and hesitate*] Did you hear? [*They plunge their daggers into their breasts and fall dead*] Carry them out! [*Exit the two remaining negroes, carrying the corpses*] Now do you doubt my power?

DOMINIQUE [*kneels*]: No! No! But I didn't say anything, your Majesty!

JEANNE: Think you that with such a people I should lack for means to compel you to do my will? I have an iron tower built on a rock of brass in a lake of sulphur, and above it, in order to prevent prisoners from escaping, four griffins continually hover. Beneath it is a marble pit, narrower than a coffin, where the stones crush the captives and they can do nothing but die! I can, if I please, have you thrown under the wheels of my chariot, burned in my porcelain ovens, devoured by my tigers, or forced to drink a poison that will cause you to disappear from the earth, leaving not so much as a drop of blood behind! Well—go! You are free!

PAUL [*crosses his arms*]: In what way?

JEANNE: You are free to leave my kingdom. [Paul *makes a gesture of doubt*] Yes,—without any one to stop you.

PAUL: How can I be sure of that?

JEANNE [*tears a bit off her scarf and impresses her seal upon it*]: My seal on this scrap of satin will be sufficient to take you safely to the frontier; and perhaps some day, if you keep it, you

will reproach yourself for having replied with ingratitude and insult to the most tender and magnificent offers ever received by a man from a queen! [*Gives the satin to* Dominique] Here, take it! Go! [*They go out by way of the gallery.* Jeanne *follows them with her eyes*]

Scene VII.

Jeanne: What have I done that he should always fly from me? It was impossible to dazzle him with my power, and my generosity did not touch him. [*Paces to and fro; looks about her*] What need have I now of all this, since he refuses me? I will abandon this kingdom and follow him—everywhere—far away! [*Sinks on the steps of the throne*] Oh, I was happier formerly when I was only a poor milkmaid. I remember one day, when I went to the garret, he praised my pretty face and my hands, which he almost kissed. And now he has not only forgotten all that, but he hates me! By what ill luck has this come about? And why is he so bitter against these good fairies, when they are only working for our happiness? [*A burst of sneering laughter comes from behind the throne*] That must be my buffoons in the great saloon, who are amusing themselves. [*Sounds of laughter*] What gaiety!

Scene VIII.

(*Enter the* King of the Gnomes *in his Gnome costume*)

Jeanne [*alarmed*]: What is this?

King: Nothing! We are amusing ourselves very well—you have said it.

Jeanne: Those voices I heard—this strange appearance—what does it mean?

King: Those who are laughing within there are genii who are infuriated at losing you, as well as your lover. I, who guided you everywhere, counselled you, and seemed to serve you, am their master, the King of the Gnomes!

Jeanne [*terrified*]: The King of the Gnomes!

King: It is my will that he shall never love you, and as soon as he sets foot on our grounds he is lost!

Jeanne: Impossible! I will run after him!

King: Too late! And even should he return, I am sure of his undoing.

Jeanne [*impatiently*]: No! No! No! I shall give orders—

King: Oh, as many as you please!

Jeanne: You will oppose them, perhaps.

King: On the contrary, you shall be punctually obeyed. Try it!

(*Exit* King, *laughing; noise of laughter increases without*)

Scene IX.

Jeanne: Why are they so opposed to him, and with what object? What matters it? A peril threatens him. Perhaps he will fall! He may be lost! Ah, he must return! What shall I do? I do not know! Shall we fly? [*Calls*] General! [*Enter the* Chief Dwarf] Oh, not you! I want some one else. Call the others — the chief of my guard, the Chancellor, soldiers, some one! Quick! Quick!

Scene X.

(*Enter an* Officer, *with soldiers, and the* Chancellor)

Jeanne: Do you know why I called you? You must have in your possession the order for the torture of that man — you know, the man who wept the other day.

Chancellor [*produces paper with a deep bow*]: Behold it, gracious Majesty!

Jeanne: Give it to me! [*Tears paper into bits*] I pardon him! [Chancellor *looks at her amazed*] Yes, a full pardon. Go and free him yourself, and see that he receives, so that he shall not suffer want in the future, three tons of silver and four camel-loads of corn. [Chancellor *is about to go*] Wait! There must be many slaves in my garden. Break their chains and send them all away in ships to their native country. Then you will search throughout the palace for all the

vestments and draperies that are kept here: fur dolmans, coats brocaded with gold, robes of tissue embroidered with pearls; and you will distribute these among the inhabitants of my city, beginning with the poorest. Wait! I have not finished. Remove all the arms from the arsenals, and plant there instead flowering shrubs that will cheer the hearts of the widows. As I have too many perfumes, throw them out of the windows that they may wash the streets! I order the abolishing of all laws except those that I make this day. It is my will that there shall not be a single sorrowful soul in my kingdom, but that a universal smile shall shine on all faces! I will have no tears save those of joy, and blessings shall fall upon my head! [*Re-enter* Paul *and* Dominique R. *with the* Officer *and soldiers*] Ah! [*To* Officer] It is well! Leave us!

[*Exit* Officer *and soldiers.*

Scene XI.

Paul [*ironically*]: I suspected the sincerity of your clemency, O Queen!

Jeanne: Unhappy man, do you calumniate me still? Listen! this is a matter that concerns your welfare.

Dominique: And not mine? Have mercy!

Jeanne: Yes, even your life.

Paul: What matters it? [*Silence*]

Jeanne: And you ask me that,—you, Paul de Damvilliers!

Paul: Who told you my name?

JEANNE [*proudly*]: Ah! What matters that to *you?*

PAUL: Oh, I understand. You are assisted by the magic of the Gnomes; but I have the protection of the Fairies, and I defy you!

JEANNE: Ah, yes! insult me, despise me, execrate me! But, in the name of that which you hold most sacred, by the souls of those most dear to you, have pity on me, I implore you, and remain here!

PAUL: I shall go at once!

JEANNE: Why do you persist in doubting me?

PAUL: Because you have already deceived me under so many guises. A short time ago you overwhelmed me with offers and protestations, and then, for no reason whatever, you deprive me of that liberty which you were so reluctant to grant.

JEANNE: But you did not know that you were going to meet certain death, because I did not know it myself. Until now I have been the victim of evil spirits whose designs I did not suspect.

PAUL: Ah, is this another trick?

JEANNE: No! No! I swear it! Do not go!

PAUL: Any risk is less perilous than your vows!

JEANNE: Look at me! Have I the appearance of a liar?

PAUL: This is only a new snare. I say this because the more I look at you and study your face, the more it calls up memories of the past, and reminds me of another — a young girl! —

JEANNE: Go on!

PAUL: She was worth all the queens in the world; and I should have done well to turn backward in my life, rather than press forward to discover the future.

JEANNE: Ah, heaven! What punishment!

PAUL: Nothing but justice.

JEANNE: But this is terrible! You do not recognise me, then, when I tell you—when you know—

KING [*suddenly appears*]: Beware!

PAUL [*aside*]: Again that man!

JEANNE: I did not summon you.

KING [*salutes*]: All the more reason that I should come, O Queen!

JEANNE: Go! Leave me! I will save him alone.

KING: But do you not see that the wretch does not wish your aid?

JEANNE [*to* Paul, *who has gone up stage*]: In heaven's name, return!

PAUL: Never! [*Drags* Dominique *with him up* C.]

JEANNE: In the name of the memory of which you spoke just now! Ah, must I give my life in order to convince you?

PAUL: I want none of your gifts!

JEANNE: Listen! I am—[*Exit* Paul *and* Dominique. *The* King *extends his hand towards* Jeanne, *who cries in a half-choked voice*] Jeanne, the milk-maid! [*She falls as if by a stroke. Enter* Gnomes *and Dwarfs; they rush on and dance around her, singing*]:

GNOMES: She is dead! She is dead! At last we triumph! None shall thwart us henceforth. Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

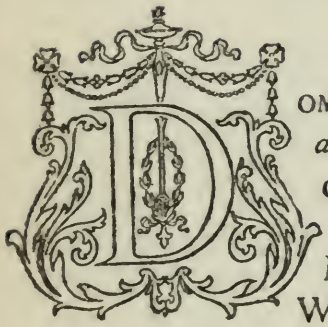
QUEEN OF THE FAIRIES [*appears upon the throne*]: No, she is not dead! [*Descends the steps of the throne slowly and spreads her mantle over* Jeanne *as if to defend her*] Her self-sacrifice has saved her!

(*The* Gnomes, *recoiling, form a circle around* Jeanne *and the* Queen)

EIGHTH TABLEAU.

The Enchanted Wood.

Scene I.



OMINIQUE [*enters* R.; *takes short steps and looks about*]: Lost! Just because I left my master one minute! Where is he, then? [*Calls*] Monsieur! Monsieur! Not here! Well, then, it's his own fault. What the devil put it into his head to bother himself with the Gnomes and the Castle of Hearts? I must look for him, however. Monsieur! Oh, that's right—run after him! I can see eyes shining among the leaves! No, it's only the way the sun strikes them. Curious effects one sees in the woods! I will go on. Forward! March! There's a bird flying away! Am I an idiot? That's what he'd do, in order to get away from here. I will try. [*A branch touches him*] Ah! [*Turns*] No one there. Heaven be praised! Rascally thorns, get out! Devilish branches, the thicker you grow, the faster I shall break you! [*Trees strike him with their branches*] But—but—it seems that I have the whole forest on my shoulders. Never mind! I shall get out. I say

that I *will* get out! [*Thrusts away a branch with each hand and breaks them. At that moment the forest opens before him, like the parting of curtains, forming a pretty green lane, with symmetrical rows of trees on each side. At the back, standing black and distinct against a rosy sunset sky, is the Castle of Hearts, so placed that only the upper stories can be seen; its three slender towers have small windows, through which shines a red light.* Dominique *remains for some time silent and motionless with surprise*]

A castle! The Castle of Hearts! It must be! It looks exactly as it was described. No, no, I am dreaming! It is impossible! [*Pinches himself*] No, I am awake! That black roof, those red lights—they suggest a monster staring at one. I must be calm. There is nothing to be afraid of—on the contrary, it is a great chance. I am the first to discover it. What joy it will be to Monsieur to know of it! But—since I am first to get here, the glory belongs to me! Why not? [*Laughs wildly*] The reward, the lady, the beautiful woman! The mansion appears seigneurial, and the land surrounding it makes quite a domain. This forest belongs to it, no doubt. How I shall cut into it! What swinging blows my men shall make—because I shall have servants. [*Walks about, growing enthusiastic*] I am a servant no longer! Good! I will have footmen like those of Sardanapalus; they shall have a red and gold livery with snug stockings, by Jove! and feathers on their hats and buttons as large as plates; and in the vestibule, at the foot of the stairs, they will play all kinds of

games with cards and dominoes; they will put on great style, and if they do not drive well— [*Makes a gesture as if kicking some one*]

Well, no one comes! That's bad luck. I've done all I can. However, I'll try once more. [*Cries feebly*] Monsieur! Monsieur! He cannot say I haven't called him! I'm done! Since he goes and hides himself in this way!—But I wish I had some witnesses here to testify how long I have been calling him. [*All the trees on the side where he called feebly, bend their branches low; those on the other side shake their leaves in sign of denial*] Ha! that's very odd! They move, although there is no wind; they move, like human beings! You do not comprehend me, surely? [*Trees bend their branches, in a movement of assent*] Horror! My marrow freezes in my bones! I am going mad! Am I about to die? Decidedly, there are things above human knowledge, and I have been wrong always to deny it. [*Sits on the ground, appearing faint*] I wish Monsieur would come now. I will wait for him. It was not a delicate thing that I meant to do—to rob him of his glory, poor fellow! after all that he has gone through. It is true that I have endured hardships with him, and until now I could always get out of any scrapes. Why should I fear that this may be any worse? That was only a little giddiness I felt just now—nothing more!

[*Looks at the Castle*] That Castle seems very much like any other castle, I think; it looks rather rugged at this distance, but it has an air! It is not deserted, evidently. There is movement within. I can smell the odours of the kitchen;

yes, and I can hear the rattling of dishes. They are expecting their master, no doubt. But I am their master! [*Looks at the trees apprehensively*] No, they do not move! Courage, Dominique! Forward! One gains nothing without assurance. [*Springs up, but his legs are turned into the trunk of a tree, covered with bark, which spreads upward over his body*] Ah! Oh! [*Arriving at his arms, the bark covers them also and they turn into branches, covered with leaves; the head remains intact*] Master! My master! Come to me, master! I—[*He is completely metamorphosed into a tree*]

Scene II.

The Trees: He is caught! Another one!

Dominique [*changed into a plum-tree*]: Help! help!

Trees: Impossible!

Dominique: Who spoke?

Trees: An oak—an elm—a linden—a spruce—an ebony-tree!

Dominique: This is a joke!

Trees: You speak very well yourself. We were all men once!

Trees: All! All!

A Linden: We have had adventures like yours, and now our only amusement is to talk among ourselves. But when a being of a superior order arrives, we become as silent as ordinary trees.

Dominique: Who is speaking to me at present?

A Linden: A linden.

Dominique: And I—what am I, then?

A LINDEN: You are too far away; I cannot see you distinctly.

DOMINIQUE: I feel myself—stupid! I should not be surprised if I were a plum-tree!

TREES: You are right! You are a wild plum-tree!

DOMINIQUE: What a shame that I am forced to stand here all by myself, like an exile; I can't even give you a shake of the branch!

AN ELM: Imitate us! resign yourself!

DOMINIQUE: But I shall be bored to death here,—I, who set out in search of a wife! When spring comes and I find myself full of nests, I shall be in a frightful position! It will be as bad as the tortures of Tantalus! You haven't any nice climbing plant that would come and cling to me awhile, have you?

TREES: No!

DOMINIQUE: Not even a pretty little weed, or a vine —some wild vine? That would suit me! Come, now! I would give her back to you!

TREES: Plum-tree, you are most immoral!

(*Chorus of Breezes among the Trees*)

Awake, woodland trees!
Tremble in the breeze!
And, hidden from the night,
Take kisses soft and light!

Give us love!
Give us song,
O pines and holly!
Let us glide,
Let us dance
In sport and folly!

Now with joyous sighs,
We come from azure skies;
A leafy tree we capture,
Embracing it with rapture!

Tender songs
Of pretty birds
Fill the air;
Within the nests,
Each fond pair rests,
Free from care!

(*Towards the end of the chorus the Trees lower their voices more and more, and leaning against each other, whisper*):

TREES: A man! A man! A man!
DOMINIQUE: It is my master, my friends, my—

SCENE III.

PAUL [*enters, overcome with fatigue*]: I shall never find it, then, this infernal castle of the Gnomes! And Dominique has disappeared! There never was such an idiot as that boy! I should have forbidden him to stir a step away from me, since I have lost two hours in searching for him. [*Stops in front of the green lane, amazed*] Ah, at last! [Dominique *shakes his branches to attract* Paul's *attention*] Here I am at last at the end of all my wanderings and all my fatigues! Thanks, good Fairy, for sustaining my courage through so many perils, where others before me have faltered! [*A burst of laughter comes from the*

Castle] That was surely laughter. But all the windows are closed — what was it, then?

Pshaw! the emotion of finding myself here has made me tremble like a woman at the cry of some bird or a wild beast. But where can Dominique be? [Dominique *shakes his leaves*] I have done more than my duty in seeking him throughout this forest. He has been a regular nuisance, besides, on this journey, and I am too good to him! I have no doubt he has fallen into some trap, where, in spite of my warnings, his curiosity or his folly has led him. [Dominique *shakes his branches harder*] Well, forward! In such an enterprise, the existence of one man is nothing, since the welfare of all mankind is concerned!

(*Suddenly there is a great burst of laughter and a sound of many voices. All the doors and windows of the Castle are opened violently. Twelve windows are seen, and in each sits a* Gnome. *On a balcony sits the* King, *crowned, with a sceptre in his hand. From each door springs a* Gnome, *laughing, shouting, and jumping about. The trees lean over, trembling violently.* Paul, *astonished, stands facing the Castle*)

Scene IV.

King [*speaks from the balcony, in a high and nasal tone*]: Ah, my sensible young master! O heart exempt from all corruption! You, who abandon your servant and yet believe yourself called upon to save the human race,— you have tripped twice

in two minutes, through egoism and through pride! Now you belong to us!

PAUL [*disdainfully*]: I?

KING: Behold that tree! It is your servant himself!

PAUL: Ye gods!

KING: Beneath the bark that hides him he still has his human feelings and his memory. You are about to become like him!

PAUL [*in a terrible tone, addressing the* Gnomes *that press around him*]: Not while this sword—

KING: Draw it, then!

(Paul, *who has his hand on his sword, is suddenly paralysed. His arms and legs preserve the attitude he took when last speaking. He becomes rigid and white, like a statue, and a ring shines on his marble hand*)

KING [*from the balcony, waves a golden sceptre*]: Now we have made your shoulders solid enough to bear the destiny of the world! What do you say to it? Keep, as a spur to remorse, the memory of the past. Remain forever in your attitude of impotent menace. Your lidless eyes shall have the gift of seeing us, and your ears of hearing us, after you have been carried to our festal hall! Under your appearance of insensibility you shall live to suffer an eternal torture!

(*All the* Gnomes, *joining hands, with great bursts of laughter and to the sound of infernal music, dance around the motionless statue*)

NINTH TABLEAU.

The Great Banquet.

Scene: *An immense dining-hall. Many lamps are suspended from the ceiling by long chains, as in a church. At each side of the stage, at regular distances, are iron columns with Corinthian capitals, with heavy chains swinging between them, to which are suspended red hearts, as if for decoration. At the back, occupying the full width of the stage, is a staircase with black steps leading to a gallery above, where the same arrangement of columns is repeated. These columns have no chains nor hearts, but have palm-leaves made of amethysts in their decorations, and glimpses of the evening sky can be seen between them. A table stands* C., *covered with golden dishes. The cloth is of purple, with a gold fringe. Twelve* Gnomes *of the first rank sit at the table, six on each side. The* King, *on a seat somewhat higher than those of the others, and facing the audience, wears a crown ornamented with little diamond hearts. At* R. I. E. Paul, *as a marble statue, and wearing the same costume as in the Eighth Tableau, preserves absolute immobility.*

(*Chorus of* Gnomes *celebrate their victory in a song, while little pages come forward on the gallery*

bearing dishes in their hands. They descend the steps and hand the dishes to the servants attending on the Gnomes. *These servants place the dishes on the table, and as they pass before the statue, each makes an ironical salutation*)

SCENE I.

IRST GNOME [R. *of* King, *looks at* Paul]: Well, my heroic simpleton, how do you like your position now?

SECOND GNOME: Behold! now you are indeed above us!

THIRD GNOME: But always despising the little Gnomes!

ALL: Ha! Ha! Ha!

FOURTH GNOME: You wished to change the world, did you?

FIFTH GNOME: Change your attitude instead.

ALL: Ha! Ha! Ha!

SIXTH GNOME: Insult us to revenge yourself!

SEVENTH GNOME: Just to make us laugh!

ALL: Ha! Ha! Ha!

KING: Good! Amuse yourselves, worthy Gnomes, my faithful subjects! Let us feast royally to celebrate our victory over mankind! At present their hearts belong to us, and we have no need to be sparing of them. Our caves, our walls, our palaces, are bursting with them. Look around you! We procure them from every part of the world; there are some from Timbuctoo and many from Paris. We have the hearts of negroes and the hearts of duchesses; some that have palpi-

tated from the effects of opium, under the Great Wall of China, and others that have grown a little rancid from being kept too long behind a London shop-counter!

(*A long branch from a tree projects itself from the right and leans close to the statue*)

SIX GNOMES [L.]: Look! Look there!

KING: Ah, it is only that idiot who was changed into a plum-tree standing near the wall of the Castle. [*A second branch appears*]

FIRST GNOME: Now there are two branches! They surround the statue, they embrace it!

KING: Pure sentimentality! It bores me! Cut them off! [*A servant cuts off the two branches with a single blow of the knife to each. A terrible cry is heard. The branches bleed against the base of the pedestal*]

SECOND GNOME: Delicate and sensitive to a degree! For a plum-tree, it is rather funny!

GNOMES: Ha! Ha! Ha!

FIRST GNOME [*looks at the statue*]: He is not at all moved, the wretch!

SECOND GNOME: Defend yourself, then! Animate yourself!

THIRD GNOME: You, too, wished to take your little share of hearts, eh?

FOURTH GNOME: Did you think that we must give them to you?

FIFTH GNOME: I should like to throw one in your face!

SIXTH GNOME: I should like to make him eat them all!

KING: Yes, and drink their blood! [*Throws the contents of his cup at the statue. The red liquid dries and clings here and there to its face and its draperies*]

SEVENTH GNOME: Answer us, coward!

EIGHTH GNOME: Do you hear? We scoff at your folly, your illusions, your courage!

NINTH GNOME: And that immaculate heart, where is it?

TENTH GNOME: You met some other nice hearts, did you not?

ELEVENTH GNOME: And some that loved you well!

TWELFTH GNOME: All the way from queens to the wives of bankers!

PAUL [*immovable, repeats slowly*]: Jeanne! Jeanne! Jeanne!

(*The* Gnomes, *startled, spring from their chairs*)

KING: Ah! Curse him!

(Jeanne *appears, in the dress of a milkmaid, beside the pedestal of the statue. She climbs up and clasps* Paul *in her arms*)

GNOMES: Look! Look!

KING: Hither! my grooms, soldiers, executioners, everyone! Come hither! Help!

(Gnomes *rush on from all sides. The statue has gradually changed to lifelike hues, while the pedestal is lowered until* Paul *and* Jeanne *are on a level with the stage*)

PAUL [*holds* Jeanne *on his left arm and draws his sword*]: Wretches, you are vanquished!

(*A broad flash of lightning pierces the sky at the back; thunder rolls; the* Gnomes *utter a loud cry, and they and the table disappear through a trap-door. Lights go down. The suspended hearts glow like little red lamps; the columns at the rear turn half-way around, and the staircase appears as a heap of ruins*)

Scene II.

Paul: Is it you? Is it indeed you? And have you pardoned me?

Jeanne: Monsieur Paul!

Paul: Oh, do not speak to me like that any more! Lift your head, you who have come to my aid before and have now delivered me, sweet angel of my life, my poor misunderstood love! And I, like a blind fool, sought others! How ungrateful I was for the past, how blind towards the future! I allowed myself to be led away by vain illusions, all the more irresistible because I found that each one of these unexpected monsters, in order to confuse me, assumed something of your ways, your image. But you, all the time, were far away!

Jeanne: Not so far as you think!

Paul: What!

Jeanne: I, too, was blind.

Paul: What do you mean?

Jeanne: Do you remember that Parisian coquette who disgusted you with her silly ways and her foolish talk?

PAUL [*laughs*]: Yes!

JEANNE [*naïvely*]: That was I!

PAUL: But—

JEANNE: Do you remember the stupid little *bourgeoise* in that hideous village?

PAUL: Don't speak to me of that little idiot!

JEANNE [*piteously*]: That was I!

PAUL: Impossible!

JEANNE: Have you forgotten that queen of infinite splendour, who, with a single gesture, caused men to die?

PAUL: Enough! Do not go on!

JEANNE [*hides her face in her hands*]: That, too, was I!

PAUL [*recoils*]: You!

JEANNE [*throws her arms around his neck*]: Yes, I! I did all that to find you again, to please you, to make you love me! I dare say it to you now! My love was so strong that, in order to reach you, I have passed through all the madness and the cruelty of the world. And as you never have understood this love, as you never have even perceived it—although it only increased at every repulse—to-day, in order to save you, I have descended from heaven!

PAUL: From heaven!

JEANNE: Ah, yes, you did not know? Listen! I died! Yes, the Gnomes deceived me! The Fairies have brought me to life only to save you. You must follow me now. Your hour has struck! Come! Come!

PAUL: Oh, yes, I believe you! I knew well what destiny was promised to me. In spite of all obstacles, I never have doubted it. And just now, while enclosed within the marble, I suffered un-

told impatience and anguish. Let us go! Lead me! The Gnomes are vanquished, let us leave the earth!

JEANNE: I shall take you to a land where the sky is always blue, where the flowers, like love, are eternal and immeasurable. There, my beloved, the storms never come; we shall have all space to hold our hearts; and our eyes, ever gazing upon each other, will have the brightness and steadfastness of the stars!

PAUL [*embraces* Jeanne]: Ah, delight of my soul, already the eternity of our happiness begins!

SCENE III.

(*The* Queen of the Fairies, *who, during the latter part of this dialogue, has descended at the back, now comes forward and steps between* Paul *and* Jeanne)

QUEEN: No, not yet!

PAUL [*indignant*]: Thou, the Queen of the Fairies! But thou didst promise me—

QUEEN: Hast thou forgotten our agreement? Thou hast accomplished only half of thy duty. The second half is more difficult, perhaps. [*Points to* Jeanne] Before attaining to the felicity of your perpetual union, you must give back to mankind the hearts liberated by your bravery.

PAUL: But how can I do it by myself?

QUEEN [*smiles*]: Oh, we shall be there! The Fairies shall aid thee. Thou hast to concern thyself only with those persons that are known to thee.

Try to convince them! Make them take back their hearts! In order that thou mayst become immortal, first perform the act of a god! [Paul *hides his face in his hands. Chorus of joyous voices is heard without*]

PAUL [*raises his face*]: Those voices?

QUEEN: They come from the trees of the enchanted forest — the liberated beings who are now returning to their human forms.

SCENE IV.

(*Enter* Dominique R. *with a bird's nest on his head. Instead of arms he has two branches covered with fruit. His arms stand out horizontally*)

JEANNE [*moved*]: My brother! To see him like that!

DOMINIQUE [*weeps*]: My poor master! At last I find you again. My tears fall like rain along my trunk — my body, I mean! I cannot clasp you in my arms — they even cut off some of my branches! I should like so much to embrace you! Cursed gluttony! you are to blame for all this! [*Bends his head and bites off a plum near his face; weeps again*] Ah, great heavens, what unhappiness!

PAUL, JEANNE } Have pity on him, good Fairy!

QUEEN [*to* Paul]: Since thou lovest him, be it so!

(*The branches drop off* Dominique *and his arms appear. At a movement of his head the nest falls off, and eggs roll out of it; one of them breaks, and a bird flies out and disappears*)

QUEEN [*to* Dominique]: But thou wilt go—

DOMINIQUE: Oh, anywhere, everywhere! Since I have pulled up the roots, I ask nothing better than to do something to take off the numbness!

QUEEN [*points to columns*]: Thou wilt go with thy master in order to help him return the hearts to those that lack them.

DOMINIQUE: Willingly! [*Looks at the suspended hearts and scratches his ear*] But—see what a quantity there is! I shall have a pretty heavy cargo!

QUEEN: No. Look! [*The hearts diminish to the size of nuts and assume a golden hue*]

DOMINIQUE: Oh, that is odd! that is certainly very queer! They won't be very heavy now. Let's try them! [*Attempts to climb the column* L. I. E.]

QUEEN: No; get down! [*The capitals of the columns at* R. *and* L. *half open, letting fall a shower of hearts*]

DOMINIQUE [*gathers them up*]: One would think they were only sugared bonbons.

QUEEN: They will be all the easier to take. [*To* Paul, *who has remained motionless beside the column* R.] What dost thou there? Why dost thou remain silent?

PAUL [*aside*]: I lose her at the very moment of victory, when all seemed finished, and I thought she was mine forever!

JEANNE [*entreatingly*]: Oh, do not despair! Go! Go! if you love me! You know not what

destiny awaits you! Do as she commands, at once!

DOMINIQUE: Come, my poor master! We must make one more journey—the last! [Paul *extends his mantle to receive some of the hearts, while* Dominique *puts others in his pockets*]

QUEEN [*points to horizon*]: Go, now!

PAUL [*turns to* Jeanne *and embraces her*]: Jeanne!

QUEEN [*waves him away*]: No! to thy duty! Hers is already accomplished on the earth. I will transport her back to the happy regions where she will await thee, where thou shalt find her when thy virtue has made thee worthy of her love!

(Paul *and* Dominique *go up stage and begin to climb the ruined staircase, stumbling among the stones*)

JEANNE: Farewell!

PAUL [*from a distance*]: Farewell!

(Dominique *turns to throw a kiss. The capitals of all the columns half open and allow a stream of little golden hearts to fall. At the same moment the* Fairies *glide upon the stage and begin to gather up the hearts in their robes.* Jeanne *stands, much moved,* R. I. E. *near the* Queen, *who holds her hand.* Paul *and* Dominique *can be seen far off on the horizon*)

TENTH TABLEAU.

The Village Fête.

Scene: *A fine park near Paris, the property of the banker*, Kloekher. *At each side of the stage are large trees and flowering shrubs. A low wall runs across the back, with steps* C., *forming an entrance. On each side of the steps are tall vases full of flowers. Other vases are placed at regular distances along the wall. Beyond, the open country can be seen, with a view of Paris in the distance. In the centre of the stage is a small grass-plot.*

Scene I.

(Monsieur *and* Madame Kloekher, Letourneux, Alfred de Cisy, Onésime Dubois, Macaret, Dr. Colombel, Bouvignard, *Guests, etc., all in fashionable summer attire. It is evening. As the curtain rises, Guests are arriving from* L. *and scattering about in various directions.* Mme. Kloekher *leans on the arm of* Alfred de Cisy. Bouvignard *hastens on alone,*

stands still, R., *and draws a flask of faïence from his pocket, wrapped in a handkerchief. Unfolds it carefully and contemplates it with delight*)

ME. KLOEKHER [*draws a deep breath*]: At last we can find a little relief out here, from the village festival, with its noises of horns and drums—most annoying while we were dining!

KLOEKHER: You are right. So tiresome that the very day one chooses to receive his friends, the common people must take that time to have one of their noisy festivals!

LETOURNEUX: Ah, if in their diversions they would only respect morality!

MACARET: Pshaw! They would only come to our doors and cry about their miseries.

COLOMBEL: And we should have to receive them into the hospitals, where we spend altogether too much time on them as it is. [*Exit.*

LETOURNEUX [*gaily*]: To think that two such good friends as we should ever have been so near a falling-out, my good Kloekher!

KLOEKHER: So near it! Why we were furious at each other! [*Laughs*]

LETOURNEUX [*laughs*]: And what about, I ask? All on account of that little Monsieur Paul!

KLOEKHER [*angrily*]: That rascally intriguer!

ALFRED [*shrugs his shoulders*]: A lunatic!

MME. KLOEKHER: A very queer fellow! [*Sits on a bench* L. Alfred *sits beside her*]

KLOEKHER: Do you know what has become of him?

ALFRED: No. Awfully sorry!

MME. KLOEKHER: You are not weeping over it, are you, Onésime,—you who were his friend?

ONÉSIME: I, Madame? Never in the world, I assure you!

MME. KLOEKHER [*laughs*]: Wouldn't it be amusing if he could only be here next week, to be one of the ushers at your marriage?

KLOEKHER: Good heavens! don't let us talk any more about that fellow! Suppose we discuss the first plan of action in that new operation of ours, Letourneux?

LETOURNEUX: With pleasure. [*They talk together as they pace slowly to and fro up stage*]

MME. KLOEKHER [*to* Onésime]: They say your fiancée is a very sweet girl.

ONÉSIME: Well, she is certainly not remarkably beautiful! But—there are other advantages!

MACARET: What's the matter with Bouvignard? He seems to be very much engrossed with that thing he's looking at. [Macaret *and* Onésime *approach* Bouvignard]

BOUVIGNARD [*to* Onésime]: You are an artist—look at that! What a design! What an enamel! [Onésime *puts out his hand to take the vase*] Take care! No, I will point out its beauties to you myself. [*Shows it to them from every point of view*]

MME. KLOEKHER [*in low tones*]: Is it all understood, then? I shall receive for next Saturday my invitation to go to the house of Madame the Countess de Trémanville?

ALFRED: And for all the following Saturdays. [Kloekher *and* Letourneux *pass before them, talking and gesticulating*] My aunt begs that you will come.

You will find a great difference in the people and the surroundings, I assure you. [*Aside*] Caught, my little *bourgeoise!*

MME. KLOEKHER: Oh, thank you! And I shall run no risk of being alarmed as I was the other day, shall I?

ALFRED: No, no! be sure of that! The fact is, I lost my head, all about nothing; but everything is perfectly arranged now. I adore you, Ernestine! [*Indicates* Kloekher] You must speak to him of me as a man entirely devoted to his interests, ready to follow his lead, to whom he may safely entrust his most confidential affairs.

MME. KLOEKHER: Oh, certainly, my friend!

ALFRED [*aside*]: If she doesn't do that, I shall have to fly to Belgium in a week!

MACARET: And have you bought it?

BOUVIGNARD: Yes, for eighty francs — not a sou more — in a wine-shop not far from here.

(*Noise of horns and firing of guns heard without*)

MME. KLOEKHER [*rises*]: More noise! This is intolerable! Really, we must complain to the authorities!

(*Noise increases; cries of enthusiasm and the movement of a large crowd are heard*)

SCENE II.

COLOMBEL [*re-enters*]: Do you know that out there in the square, among the shops, something very original, extraordinary, and amusing is going on?

I have seen many mountebanks in my day, but never one like that! A man out there is selling hearts for a sou apiece.

ALFRED: That is not dear!

A LADY: No, but very curious!

A GENTLEMAN: It might be worth while to see him. What say you?

ANOTHER GUEST: We should only be compelled to listen to his impertinences.

MACARET: Sometimes these rascals are very amusing, however. [*Guests surround* Mme. Kloekher]

MME. KLOEKHER: I don't know whether I ought or not — Is he a person one could ask to come in here, Doctor?

COLOMBEL: Oh, for yourself — certainly not, fair lady! You have no need of him. But [*To the other Ladies*] as for us, from whom you have stolen all our hearts —

KLOEKHER [*about to go*]: Bah! A truce to your flattery! I am going to call him.

GUESTS: Bravo! Good! Capital idea!

COLOMBEL [*goes up stage, makes a sign off* R.]: Come here! I shall take the liberty, in my character of a physician, to give you a little surprise, ladies!

SCENE III.

(*Enter* Paul, *wearing long white hair and beard and a large velvet cloak that covers his figure completely.* Dominique *follows him, dressed as a Chinaman, carrying on his back a large box and a red leather bag, and in his hand a small folding-chair.*

They halt upon the grass-plot C. Dominique *puts the bag upon the chair*)

A LADY: Oh, this is going to be very nice! It amuses me already. I love conjurers.

MME. KLOEKHER: Do you need a table to assist you in performing your tricks?

PAUL: Thank you, Madame. I do not perform tricks. My mission is a higher one. It is to bring about your moral health and amelioration that I am here. I am charged by the Fairies to give you back your stolen hearts!

MEN: What! Our hearts!

ALFRED: He is very polite, your Nostradamus!

PAUL: It is not a matter of politeness. I speak seriously, believe me!

MEN: How funny! How very amusing! [*Laughter*]

COLOMBEL [*to* Mme. Kloekher]: Did I not tell you his manner was perfect?

DOMINIQUE [*pours a quantity of gilded bonbons from the bag upon the folding-chair*]: Now, gentlemen, who forbids you? Come, ladies, a little courage! They are pretty, sweet as sugar, and very wholesome!

COLOMBEL: He expresses himself well, this Chinaman from Paris!

DOMINIQUE: No, Monsieur, we have just arrived from Pipempohé [*strokes his moustache*], where the Sultan made us the most flattering offers!

GUESTS [*laugh*]: Pipempohé! The Sultan!

PAUL: And after that I captured them in the fortress of the Gnomes!

GUESTS: The Gnomes! How seriously he speaks!

ONÉSIME: Let him go on.

PAUL: But I have finished. I tell you once more that, acting upon the commands of the Fairies, I must return to you your hearts.

DOMINIQUE [*taps the box on his back*]: Hearts! hearts! hearts! Come and get your hearts!

PAUL [*checks him*]: Be quiet! [*Clasps his hands entreatingly*] Ah, it is for your sakes that I come! Take them! Hasten, I beg of you!

A LADY: Does one eat them?

MME. KLOEKHER: Do not touch the things! Perhaps they are drugged.

ONÉSIME: All the same, I am going to risk it! Come on, Bouvignard, I'll buy one for you. Do as I do! [*Hands a piece of money to* Paul, *and begins to crunch a bonbon heart.* Bouvignard *does the same*]

A LADY [*speaks low*]: Very singular people, these artists!

COLOMBEL [*gives money to* Paul *and takes a bonbon*]: Well, of course I must follow Onésime's example, seeing that I brought this funny fellow here.

ONÉSIME [*suddenly strikes his forehead with his hand*]: Unhappy that I am! Where is she?

MME. KLOEKHER: Of whom are you speaking?

ONÉSIME: Clémence!

MME. KLOEKHER [*aside*]: What are you thinking of, to say that before every one? Remember your approaching marriage!

ONÉSIME: Never mind my marriage! [*Exit calling loudly*] Clémence! Clémence!

BOUVIGNARD [*raises his voice*]: What stupidity to waste money on such trifles as that! [*Throws his vase on the floor; it breaks*] That's a good thing! Now I will sell my whole collection to obtain a dowry for my poor daughter.

COLOMBEL [*speaks to himself, pacing to and fro*]: To buy the land, say, a million francs! I'll do it! As to the rest, what with private subscriptions and an appeal to the government, I shall be able to found my great hospital! [*Sees that the others are observing him*] Yes, gentlemen, I intend to consecrate my future, my time, my science, and all my efforts, to this great work! The practice shall be directed by noted specialists; the halls shall be hung with tapestry; the beds shall be of mahogany. Devil take me if I don't do it!

GUESTS [*surprised*]: What does this mean?

LETOURNEUX: That stuff contains something that affects the brain.

PAUL: Take one! I do not sell them; I give them freely.

MACARET: Well, at that price — Besides, I don't see what interest he would have in doing any harm! [*Eats a bonbon*]

PAUL [*to* Alfred]: And you, Monsieur, surely you are not afraid to try one, when so many others have tasted them?

ALFRED: I! Afraid! The idea! I will take two of them. [*Takes two bonbons and eats one*]

MME. KLOEKHER: You, too?

ALFRED [*aside to* Mme. Kloekher]: But it is really excellent — sweeter than honey and soft as a kiss! Share with me the passion that tortures me! Although I have said before that I loved you, what I feel now is a new love. Let us quit this horrible existence! Let us fly far away to some unknown shore, to the depths of a forest or to a desert! It matters not where if we are only together, that I may have the bliss of cher-

ishing you forever! [*Puts a bonbon to the lips of* Mme. Kloekher; *she eats it*]

MME. KLOEKHER [*drops her veil and takes her husband's arm affectionately*]: Alphonse, my dear!

KLOEKHER: Hey? What?

MME. KLOEKHER: These people bore me! We used to be so cosy together in our pretty home! I love thee!

KLOEKHER [*aside*]: Now my wife says she loves me! She has lost her head!

MACARET [*sobs in a corner*, R.]: Oh! oh! Good heavens! Oh!

KLOEKHER: What is the matter with you?

MACARET [*takes no notice of him*]: Oh! oh! So many precious days lost! Oh! I am like Titus!

(*The Guests, who have all taken the bonbons, now press near* Paul)

DOMINIQUE [*aside to* Paul]. This is going well!

PAUL [*aside*]: No, we still have some left. Dominique! [Dominique *knocks on the box*]

PAUL [*impatiently*]: Come! Come, then!

KLOEKHER [*irritated*]: This farce is played out! Every one has had enough of it. Get out, now!

PAUL: *You* have not had one,—you, Alphonse-Jean-Baptiste-Isidore Kloekher!

KLOEKHER: Insolent! Who told you my names?

PAUL: I know them!

KLOEKHER *and* LETOURNEUX: Get out! Be off!

PAUL: Not until you have taken this heart!

KLOEKHER: I?

PAUL: I conjure you!

KLOEKHER: But this is an outrage!

PAUL: I command you!

KLOEKHER [*remains silent with anger a moment, then takes a majestic pose*]: By what right? [Paul, *without replying, takes off, with a single movement, his wig and beard and the velvet robe.* Kloekher *raises his hands, amazed and shocked, as if at the sight of a spectre*] He!

MME. KLOEKHER [*takes his arm gently, points to* Paul, *and speaks softly*]: Monsieur Paul!

LETOURNEUX [*bites his thumb and turns his back*]: Paul de Damvilliers!

A LADY: What a delightful surprise!

COLOMBEL: That excellent young man!

ALFRED [*presses* Paul's *hand*]: Dear friend! [*Guests surround* Paul *and shake hands with him*]

KLOEKHER: Good heavens! is every one his friend? Suppose he should tell! [*Suddenly extends his hand*] I will have one! [*Eats a bonbon*]

DOMINIQUE [*aside*]: That's what we wanted!

KLOEKHER [*in a half-choked voice*]: Ah! Wait! Oh, what have I done? I forgot! Those poor men that I caused to be sent away to the prison at Clichy the day before yesterday! [*Addresses a Lady*] Call François! [*To a Gentleman*] Pierre! Set them free! Send some one to their assistance!

LETOURNEUX [*approaches* Kloekher *anxiously*]: My friend!

KLOEKHER: And that worthy fellow, the inventor, to whom I refused twenty thousand francs. I must see about him! Where is my strong-box?

LETOURNEUX: But you are not serious, Kloekher?

KLOEKHER: Leave me, you! [Letourneux *recoils, with a gesture of astonishment and pity*] I am happy! Yes! Do you hear, all of you? Happy that you are here to witness an act of—of—justice,—no,

an act of confidence. It is a matter of restitution — what did I say? — rather, of a sacred trust! [*Strikes his breast with both hands*] Fool that I am! Yes, I repeat, a sacred trust!

PAUL [*proudly*]: I did not come here for that, Monsieur!

KLOEKHER: That does not matter, young man! I shall profit by the occasion. I feel a great burden lifted from my heart, and not later than this very night I shall make restitution. [*Presses* Paul's *hand. Sound heard of villagers rejoicing*] How pleasant it is to hear the gaiety of the people! It doubles our own happiness to know that they are happy too. Poor people! they have none too many holidays throughout the long year. [*Calls loudly*] Open the champagne! Call them all in! Open the gates! Ah, what a glorious day! [*Rosy light thrown on the stage*] I see life through rose-coloured spectacles to-day!

SCENE IV.

(*Enter a throng of Villagers, also* Father *and* Mother Thomas *and the proprietor of the wine-shop*)

THE PEOPLE: Long live Kloekher! Long live Monsieur Kloekher!

KLOEKHER: My heart swells!

MACARET [*sobs in his corner*]: Ah, how touching!

DOMINIQUE [*taps his box*]: Hasten, hasten! Follow the crowd! Come, take the rest of the hearts!

(*The people surround* Paul *and* Dominique. *Three servants in livery carry around baskets filled with*

bottles of champagne. Kloekher *pulls out the corks, and, followed by a servant, mingles with the people and presses them to drink*)

KLOEKHER: Drink it down! Toss it off, boys!

(*The rosy light deepens gradually until the end of the Tableau. Luminous tulips and sunflowers bloom among the trees. The grapes on a vine clinging around an oak-tree are turned into garnets; the leaves change to silver; and the leaves on all the other trees and shrubs turn to precious stones. The People embrace one another and dance about with joy.* Father *and* Mother Thomas *throw kisses to their son*)

DOMINIQUE [*to* Paul]: Well! All is finished, my good master! there is nothing more in the bag. Let us amuse ourselves like the rest.

PAUL [*takes a bonbon from the chair, holds it between his fingers and speaks slowly*]: There is still one left!

DOMINIQUE [*takes bonbon quickly*]: Well, there won't be long! I'll fix that! [*To a Gentleman*] You, Monsieur?

GENTLEMAN: I have had one.

DOMINIQUE [*to a Lady*]: You, Madame.

LADY: I, too, have had one.

DOMINIQUE: Here it is! The last one!

LADIES: We have all had one!

ALL: All! All!

PAUL [*speaks low*]: But that would be terrible! it is impossible!

DOMINIQUE [*speaks low, terrified, still holding the heart, which grows larger each moment*]: Master! Look! It grows! It swells!

LETOURNEUX [*comes up behind* Paul *and slaps his shoulder*]: You would like very much to have me swallow that, wouldn't you?

PAUL: Yes! Yes! Pardon me for that which I did to you! [*Shows the heart*] Take it! It will bring you peace of mind, the power to do good, appreciation of all that is beautiful, the ability to comprehend, simultaneously, humanity, nature and God! [Letourneux *smiles ironically, without moving*] But who are you, then, to remain insensible in the face of the happiness of all? From what stone were you quarried? Have you never loved anything, any one? Have you never dreamed of possessing happiness, or grieved to lose it? Ah, if it is necessary, in order to convince you, let me pour out my blood, go to the ends of the earth, serve you as a slave! Have pity! I beseech you! Yield to my entreaties! Take the heart!

LETOURNEUX: Thanks! It would bore me too much!

PAUL: Farewell, then, Jeanne! I am accursed! I have lost thee!

(*The low wall at the back rises in height, and the flight of steps, now turned to silver, is lengthened. From each of the large vases of flowers emerges a woman. Each extends her arms so that they rest on the shoulders of her next neighbour, forming a long file. They are in white garments, decorated with pearls. Among the clouds above them at the back, the lower part of the Palace of the Fairies can be seen, with moonlight shining upon it, making it look like mother-of-pearl.* Jeanne *is seen standing in front of it at the top of the flight of steps.* Paul, *turning to*

follow the glance of Letourneux, *perceives her and calls her name loudly. He runs up the steps. As he goes his dress changes to a costume appropriate to an apotheosis,—white, with a flowing mantle. At every step he takes, a melodious strain issues from the stairs, following all the notes of the scale. When he reaches* Jeanne *he opens his arms to embrace her; at that instant the* Queen of the Fairies *appears at* Jeanne's *side, while the other* Fairies *group themselves in the rear and at* R. *and* L. *On the peristyle of the Palace, which now shines clear and white,* Paul *stops and draws back*)

PAUL: I dare not advance, O Queen! My mission is not finished. I have left evil still upon the earth!

QUEEN: There must always be evil upon earth! Thou hast not the less merited thy reward! Be happy in immortality!

DOMINIQUE [*with one foot on the lowest step, and holding the heart in his hand*]: And I, O Queen! What must I do with this heart?

QUEEN: Be thou the Guardian of Hearts! Keep a watch over those that cheat; console those that lose!

(Dominique *is changed into the* Guardian of Hearts. *The heart in his hand flies into the air at his left and rests upon a white square, which is of a proper size to hold it and serves as a foundation for it. A long narrow banner unfolds itself in the air, displaying in luminous letters these words*):

VIRTUE BEING REWARDED, THERE IS NOTHING MORE TO SAY!

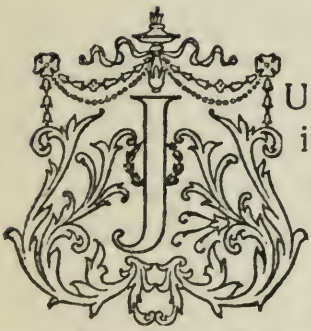
[*Curtain*]

The Legend of Saint Julian

The Hospitaller

The Legend of Saint Julian the Hospitaller

I.



ULIAN'S father and mother dwelt in a castle built on the slope of a hill, in the heart of the woods.

The towers at its four corners had pointed roofs covered with leaden tiles, and the foundation rested upon solid rocks, which descended abruptly to the bottom of the moat.

In the courtyard, the stone flagging was as immaculate as the floor of a church. Long rain-spouts, representing dragons with yawning jaws, directed the water towards the cistern, and on each window-sill of the castle a basil or a heliotrope bush bloomed, in painted flower-pots.

A second enclosure, surrounded by a fence, comprised a fruit-orchard, a garden decorated with figures wrought in bright-hued flowers, an arbour with several bowers, and a mall for the diversion of the pages. On the other side were the kennel, the stables, the bakery, the wine-press and the barns.

Around these spread a pasture, also enclosed by a strong hedge.

Peace had reigned so long that the portcullis was never lowered; the moats were filled with water; swallows built their nests in the cracks of the battlements, and as soon as the sun shone too strongly, the archer who all day long paced to and fro on the curtain, withdrew to the watch-tower and slept soundly.

Inside the castle, the locks on the doors shone brightly; costly tapestries hung in the apartments to keep out the cold; the closets overflowed with linen, the cellar was filled with casks of wine, and the oak chests fairly groaned under the weight of money-bags.

In the armoury could be seen, between banners and the heads of wild beasts, weapons of all nations and of all ages, from the slings of the Amalekites and the javelins of the Garamantes, to the broad-swords of the Saracens and the coats of mail of the Normans.

The largest spit in the kitchen could hold an ox; the chapel was as gorgeous as a king's oratory. There was even a Roman bath in a secluded part of the castle, though the good lord of the manor refrained from using it, as he deemed it a heathenish practice.

Wrapped always in a cape made of fox-skins, he wandered about the castle, rendered justice among his vassals and settled his neighbours' quarrels. In the winter, he gazed dreamily at the falling snow, or had stories read aloud to him. But as soon as the fine weather returned, he would mount his mule and sally forth into the country roads, edged with ripening wheat, to talk with the peasants, to whom he distributed advice. After a number of adventures he took unto himself a wife of high lineage.

She was pale and serious, and a trifle haughty. The horns of her head-dress touched the top of the doors and the hem of her gown trailed far behind her. She conducted her household like a cloister. Every morning she distributed work to the maids, supervised the making of preserves and unguents, and afterwards passed her time in spinning, or in embroidering altar-cloths. In response to her fervent prayers, God granted her a son!

Then there was great rejoicing; and they gave a feast which lasted three days and four nights, with illuminations and soft music. Chickens as large as sheep, and the rarest spices were served; for the entertainment of the guests, a dwarf crept out of a pie; and when the bowls were too few, for the crowd swelled continuously, the wine was drunk from helmets and hunting-horns.

The young mother did not appear at the feast. She was quietly resting in bed. One night she awoke, and beheld in a moonbeam that crept through the window something that looked like a moving shadow. It was an old man clad in sackcloth, who resembled a hermit. A rosary dangled at his side and he carried a beggar's sack on his shoulder. He approached the foot of the bed, and without opening his lips said: "Rejoice, O mother! Thy son shall be a saint."

She would have cried out, but the old man, gliding along the moonbeam, rose through the air and disappeared. The songs of the banqueters grew louder. She could hear angels' voices, and her head sank back on the pillow, which was surmounted by the bone of a martyr, framed in precious stones.

The following day, the servants, upon being ques-

tioned, declared, to a man, that they had seen no hermit. Then, whether dream or fact, this must certainly have been a communication from heaven; but she took care not to speak of it, lest she should be accused of presumption.

The guests departed at daybreak, and Julian's father stood at the castle gate, where he had just bidden farewell to the last one, when a beggar suddenly emerged from the mist and confronted him. He was a gipsy—for he had a braided beard and wore silver bracelets on each arm. His eyes burned and, in an inspired way, he muttered some disconnected words: "Ah! Ah! thy son!—great bloodshed—great glory—happy always—an emperor's family."

Then he stooped to pick up the alms thrown to him, and disappeared in the tall grass.

The lord of the manor looked up and down the road and called as loudly as he could. But no one answered him! The wind only howled and the morning mists were fast dissolving.

He attributed his vision to a dullness of the brain resulting from too much sleep. "If I should speak of it," quoth he, "people would laugh at me." Still, the glory that was to be his son's dazzled him, albeit the meaning of the prophecy was not clear to him, and he even doubted that he had heard it.

The parents kept their secret from each other. But both cherished the child with equal devotion, and as they considered him marked by God, they had great regard for his person. His cradle was lined with the softest feathers, and a lamp representing a dove burned continually over it; three nurses rocked him night and day, and with his pink cheeks and blue eyes, brocaded cloak and embroidered cap, he

looked like a little Jesus. He cut all his teeth without even a whimper.

When he was seven years old his mother taught him to sing, and his father lifted him upon a tall horse, to inspire him with courage. The child smiled with delight, and soon became familiar with everything pertaining to chargers. An old and very learned monk taught him the Gospel, the Arabic numerals, the Latin letters, and the art of painting delicate designs on vellum. They worked in the top of a tower, away from all noise and disturbance.

When the lesson was over, they would go down into the garden and study the flowers.

Sometimes a herd of cattle passed through the valley below, in charge of a man in Oriental dress. The lord of the manor, recognising him as a merchant, would despatch a servant after him. The stranger, becoming confident, would stop on his way and after being ushered into the castle-hall, would display pieces of velvet and silk, trinkets and strange objects whose use was unknown in those parts. Then, in due time, he would take leave, without having been molested and with a handsome profit.

At other times, a band of pilgrims would knock at the door. Their wet garments would be hung in front of the hearth and after they had been refreshed by food they would relate their travels, and discuss the uncertainty of vessels on the high seas, their long journeys across burning sands, the ferocity of the infidels, the caves of Syria, the Manger and the Holy Sepulchre. They made presents to the young heir of beautiful shells, which they carried in their cloaks.

The lord of the manor very often feasted his brothers-at-arms, and over the wine the old warriors

would talk of battles and attacks, of war-machines and of the frightful wounds they had received, so that Julian, who was a listener, would scream with excitement; then his father felt convinced that some day he would be a conqueror. But in the evening, after the Angelus, when he passed through the crowd of beggars who clustered about the church-door, he distributed his alms with so much modesty and nobility that his mother fully expected to see him become an archbishop in time.

His seat in the chapel was next to his parents, and no matter how long the services lasted, he remained kneeling on his *prie-dieu*, with folded hands and his velvet cap lying close beside him on the floor.

One day, during mass, he raised his head and beheld a little white mouse crawling out of a hole in the wall. It scrambled to the first altar-step and then, after a few gambols, ran back in the same direction. On the following Sunday, the idea of seeing the mouse again worried him. It returned; and every Sunday after that he watched for it; and it annoyed him so much that he grew to hate it and resolved to do away with it.

So, having closed the door and strewn some crumbs on the steps of the altar, he placed himself in front of the hole with a stick. After a long while a pink snout appeared, and then the whole mouse crept out. He struck it lightly with his stick and stood stunned at the sight of the little, lifeless body. A drop of blood stained the floor. He wiped it away hastily with his sleeve, and picking up the mouse, threw it away, without saying a word about it to anyone.

All sorts of birds pecked at the seeds in the garden. He put some peas in a hollow reed, and when he heard birds chirping in a tree, he would approach cautiously, lift the tube and swell his cheeks; then, when the little creatures dropped about him in multitudes, he could not refrain from laughing and being delighted with his own cleverness.

One morning, as he was returning by way of the curtain, he beheld a fat pigeon sunning itself on the top of the wall. He paused to gaze at it; where he stood the rampart was cracked and a piece of stone was near at hand; he gave his arm a jerk and the well-aimed missile struck the bird squarely, sending it straight into the moat below.

He sprang after it, unmindful of the brambles, and ferreted around the bushes with the litheness of a young dog.

The pigeon hung with broken wings in the branches of a privet hedge.

The persistence of its life irritated the boy. He began to strangle it, and its convulsions made his heart beat quicker, and filled him with a wild, tumultuous voluptuousness, the last throb of its heart making him feel like fainting.

At supper that night, his father declared that at his age a boy should begin to hunt; and he arose and brought forth an old writing-book which contained, in questions and answers, everything pertaining to the pastime. In it, a master showed a supposed pupil how to train dogs and falcons, lay traps, recognise a stag by its fumets, and a fox or a wolf by footprints. He also taught the best way of discovering their tracks, how to start them, where their

refuges are usually to be found, what winds are the most favourable, and further enumerated the various cries, and the rules of the quarry.

When Julian was able to recite all these things by heart, his father made up a pack of hounds for him. There were twenty-four greyhounds of Barbary, speedier than gazelles, but liable to get out of temper; seventeen couples of Breton dogs, great barkers, with broad chests and russet coats flecked with white. For wild-boar hunting and perilous doublings, there were forty boarhounds as hairy as bears.

The red mastiffs of Tartary, almost as large as donkeys, with broad backs and straight legs, were destined for the pursuit of the wild bull. The black coats of the spaniels shone like satin; the barking of the setters equalled that of the beagles. In a special enclosure were eight growling bloodhounds that tugged at their chains and rolled their eyes, and these dogs leaped at men's throats and were not afraid even of lions.

All ate wheat bread, drank from marble troughs, and had high-sounding names.

Perhaps the falconry surpassed the pack; for the master of the castle, by paying great sums of money, had secured Caucasian hawks, Babylonian sakers, German gerfalcons, and pilgrim falcons captured on the cliffs edging the cold seas, in distant lands. They were housed in a thatched shed and were chained to the perch in the order of size. In front of them was a little grass-plot where, from time to time, they were allowed to disport themselves.

Bag-nets, baits, traps and all sorts of snares were manufactured.

Often they would take out pointers who would set almost immediately; then the whippers-in, advancing step by step, would cautiously spread a huge net over their motionless bodies. At the command, the dogs would bark and arouse the quails; and the ladies of the neighbourhood, with their husbands, children and hand-maids, would fall upon them and capture them with ease.

At other times they used a drum to start hares; and frequently foxes fell into the ditches prepared for them, while wolves caught their paws in the traps.

But Julian scorned these convenient contrivances; he preferred to hunt away from the crowd, alone with his steed and his falcon. It was almost always a large, snow-white, Scythian bird. His leather hood was ornamented with a plume, and on his blue feet were bells; and he perched firmly on his master's arm while they galloped across the plains. Then Julian would suddenly untie his tether and let him fly, and the bold bird would dart through the air like an arrow. One might perceive two spots circle around, unite, and then disappear in the blue heights. Presently the falcon would return with a mutilated bird, and perch again on his master's gauntlet with trembling wings.

Julian loved to sound his trumpet and follow his dogs over hills and streams, into the woods; and when the stag began to moan under their teeth, he would kill it deftly, and delight in the fury of the brutes, which would devour the pieces spread out on the warm hide.

On foggy days, he would hide in the marshes to watch for wild geese, otters and wild ducks.

At daybreak, three equerries waited for him at the foot of the steps; and though the old monk leaned out of the dormer-window and made signs to him to return, Julian would not look around.

He heeded neither the broiling sun, the rain nor the storm; he drank spring water and ate wild berries, and when he was tired, he lay down under a tree; and he would come home at night covered with earth and blood, with thistles in his hair and smelling of wild beasts. He grew to be like them. And when his mother kissed him, he responded coldly to her caress and seemed to be thinking of deep and serious things.

He killed bears with a knife, bulls with a hatchet, and wild boars with a spear; and once, with nothing but a stick, he defended himself against some wolves, which were gnawing corpses at the foot of a gibbet.

One winter morning he set out before daybreak, with a bow slung across his shoulder and a quiver of arrows attached to the pummel of his saddle. The hoofs of his steed beat the ground with regularity and his two beagles trotted close behind. The wind was blowing hard and icicles clung to his cloak. A part of the horizon cleared, and he beheld some rabbits playing around their burrows. In an instant, the two dogs were upon them, and seizing as many as they could, they broke their backs in the twinkling of an eye.

Soon he came to a forest. A woodcock, paralysed by the cold, perched on a branch, with its head hidden under its wing. Julian, with a lunge of his sword, cut off its feet, and without stopping to pick it up, rode away.

Three hours later he found himself on the top of a mountain so high that the sky seemed almost black. In front of him, a long, flat rock hung over a precipice, and at the end, two wild goats stood gazing down into the abyss. As he had no arrows (for he had left his steed behind), he thought he would climb down to where they stood; and with bare feet and bent back he at last reached the first goat and thrust his dagger below its ribs. But the second animal, in its terror, leaped into the precipice. Julian threw himself forward to strike it, but his right foot slipped, and he fell, face downward and with outstretched arms, over the body of the first goat.

After he returned to the plains, he followed a stream bordered by willows. From time to time, some cranes, flying low, passed over his head. He killed them with his whip, never missing a bird. He beheld in the distance the gleam of a lake which appeared to be of lead, and in the middle of it was an animal he had never seen before, a beaver with a black muzzle. Notwithstanding the distance that separated them, an arrow ended its life and Julian only regretted that he was not able to carry the skin home with him.

Then he entered an avenue of tall trees, the tops of which formed a triumphal arch to the entrance of a forest. A deer sprang out of the thicket and a badger crawled out of its hole, a stag appeared in the road, and a peacock spread its fan-shaped tail on the grass — and after he had slain them all, other deer, other stags, other badgers, other peacocks, and jays, blackbirds, foxes, porcupines, polecats, and lynxes, appeared; in fact, a host of beasts that grew more and more numerous with every step he took. Trembling,

and with a look of appeal in their eyes, they gathered around Julian, but he did not stop slaying them; and so intent was he on stretching his bow, drawing his sword and whipping out his knife, that he had little thought for aught else. He knew that he was hunting in some country since an indefinite time, through the very fact of his existence, as everything seemed to occur with the ease one experiences in dreams. But presently an extraordinary sight made him pause.

He beheld a valley shaped like a circus and filled with stags which, huddled together, were warming one another with the vapour of their breaths that mingled with the early mist.

For a few minutes, he almost choked with pleasure at the prospect of so great a carnage. Then he sprang from his horse, rolled up his sleeves, and began to aim.

When the first arrow whizzed through the air, the stags turned their heads simultaneously. They huddled closer, uttered plaintive cries, and a great agitation seized the whole herd. The edge of the valley was too high to admit of flight; and the animals ran around the enclosure in their efforts to escape. Julian aimed, stretched his bow and his arrows fell as fast and thick as raindrops in a shower.

Maddened with terror, the stags fought and reared and climbed on top of one another; their antlers and bodies formed a moving mountain which tumbled to pieces whenever it displaced itself.

Finally the last one expired. Their bodies lay stretched out on the sand with foam gushing from the nostrils and the bowels protruding. The heaving of their bellies grew less and less noticeable, and presently all was still.

Night came, and behind the trees, through the branches, the sky appeared like a sheet of blood.

Julian leaned against a tree and gazed with dilated eyes at the enormous slaughter. He was now unable to comprehend how he had accomplished it.

On the opposite side of the valley, he suddenly beheld a large stag, with a doe and their fawn. The buck was black and of enormous size; he had a white beard and carried sixteen antlers. His mate was the color of dead leaves, and she browsed upon the grass, while the fawn, clinging to her udder, followed her step by step.

Again the bow was stretched, and instantly the fawn dropped dead, and seeing this, its mother raised her head and uttered a poignant, almost human wail of agony. Exasperated, Julian thrust his knife into her chest, and felled her to the ground.

The great stag had watched everything and suddenly he sprang forward. Julian aimed his last arrow at the beast. It struck him between his antlers and stuck there.

The stag did not appear to notice it; leaping over the bodies, he was coming nearer and nearer with the intention, Julian thought, of charging at him and ripping him open, and he recoiled with inexpressible horror. But presently the huge animal halted, and, with eyes aflame and the solemn air of a patriarch and a judge, repeated thrice, while a bell tolled in the distance:

"Accursed! Accursed! Accursed! some day, ferocious soul, thou wilt murder thy father and thy mother!"

Then he sank on his knees, gently closed his lids and expired.

At first Julian was stunned, and then a sudden lassitude and an immense sadness came over him. Holding his head between his hands, he wept for a long time.

His steed had wandered away; his dogs had forsaken him; the solitude seemed to threaten him with unknown perils. Impelled by a sense of sickening terror, he ran across the fields, and choosing a path at random, found himself almost immediately at the gates of the castle.

That night he could not rest, for, by the flickering light of the hanging lamp, he beheld again the huge black stag. He fought against the obsession of the prediction and kept repeating: "No! No! No! I cannot slay them!" and then he thought: "Still, supposing I desired to?—" and he feared that the devil might inspire him with this desire.

During three months, his distracted mother prayed at his bedside, and his father paced the halls of the castle in anguish. He consulted the most celebrated physicians, who prescribed quantities of medicine. Julian's illness, they declared, was due to some injurious wind or to amorous desire. But in reply to their questions, the young man only shook his head. After a time, his strength returned, and he was able to take a walk in the courtyard, supported by his father and the old monk.

But after he had completely recovered, he refused to hunt.

His father, hoping to please him, presented him with a large Saracen sabre.

It was placed on a panoply that hung on a pillar, and a ladder was required to reach it. Julian climbed up to it one day, but the heavy weapon slipped

from his grasp, and in falling grazed his father and tore his cloak. Julian, believing he had killed him, fell in a swoon.

After that, he carefully avoided weapons. The sight of a naked sword made him grow pale, and this weakness caused great distress to his family.

In the end, the old monk ordered him in the name of God, and of his forefathers, once more to indulge in the sports of a nobleman.

The equerries diverted themselves every day with javelins and Julian soon excelled in the practice.

He was able to send a javelin into bottles, to break the teeth of the weather-cocks on the castle and to strike door-nails at a distance of one hundred feet.

One summer evening, at the hour when dusk renders objects indistinct, he was in the arbour in the garden, and thought he saw two white wings in the background hovering around the espalier. Not for a moment did he doubt that it was a stork, and so he threw his javelin at it.

A heart-rending scream pierced the air.

He had struck his mother, whose cap and long streamers remained nailed to the wall.

Julian fled from home and never returned.

II.

He joined a horde of adventurers who were passing through the place.

He learned what it was to suffer hunger, thirst, sickness and filth. He grew accustomed to the din of battles and to the sight of dying men. The wind

tanned his skin. His limbs became hardened through contact with armour, and as he was very strong and brave, temperate and of good counsel, he easily obtained command of a company.

At the outset of a battle, he would electrify his soldiers by a motion of his sword. He would climb the walls of a citadel with a knotted rope, at night, rocked by the storm, while sparks of fire clung to his cuirass, and molten lead and boiling tar poured from the battlements.

Often a stone would break his shield. Bridges crowded with men gave way under him. Once, by turning his mace, he rid himself of fourteen horsemen. He defeated all those who came forward to fight him on the field of honour, and more than a score of times it was believed that he had been killed.

However, thanks to Divine protection, he always escaped, for he shielded orphans, widows, and aged men. When he caught sight of one of the latter walking ahead of him, he would call to him to show his face, as if he feared that he might kill him by mistake.

All sorts of intrepid men gathered under his leadership, fugitive slaves, peasant rebels, and penniless bastards; he then organized an army which increased so much that he became famous and was in great demand.

He succoured in turn the Dauphin of France, the King of England, the Templars of Jerusalem, the General of the Parths, the Negus of Abyssinia and the Emperor of Calicut. He fought against Scandinavians covered with fish-scales, against negroes mounted on red asses and armed with shields made of hippopotamus hide, against gold-coloured Indians who wielded

great, shining swords above their heads. He conquered the Troglodytes and the cannibals. He travelled through regions so torrid that the heat of the sun would set fire to the hair on one's head; he journeyed through countries so glacial that one's arms would fall from the body; and he passed through places where the fogs were so dense that it seemed like being surrounded by phantoms.

Republics in trouble consulted him; when he conferred with ambassadors, he always obtained unexpected concessions. Also, if a monarch behaved badly, he would arrive on the scene and rebuke him. He freed nations. He rescued queens sequestered in towers. It was he and no other that killed the serpent of Milan and the dragon of Oberbirbach.

Now, the Emperor of Occitania, having triumphed over the Spanish Mussulmans, had taken the sister of the Caliph of Cordova as a concubine, and had had one daughter by her, whom he brought up in the teachings of Christ. But the Caliph, feigning that he wished to become converted, made him a visit, and brought with him a numerous escort. He slaughtered the entire garrison and threw the Emperor into a dungeon, and treated him with great cruelty in order to obtain possession of his treasures.

Julian went to his assistance, destroyed the army of infidels, laid siege to the city, slew the Caliph, chopped off his head and threw it over the fortifications like a cannon-ball.

As a reward for so great a service, the Emperor presented him with a large sum of money in baskets; but Julian declined it. Then the Emperor, thinking that the amount was not sufficiently large, offered him three quarters of his fortune, and on meeting a

second refusal, proposed to share his kingdom with his benefactor. But Julian only thanked him for it, and the Emperor felt like weeping with vexation at not being able to show his gratitude, when he suddenly tapped his forehead and whispered a few words in the ear of one of his courtiers; the tapestry curtains parted and a young girl appeared.

Her large black eyes shone like two soft lights. A charming smile parted her lips. Her curls were caught in the jewels of her half-opened bodice, and the grace of her youthful body could be divined under the transparency of her tunic.

She was small and quite plump, but her waist was slender.

Julian was absolutely dazzled, all the more since he had always led a chaste life.

So he married the Emperor's daughter, and received at the same time a castle she had inherited from her mother; and when the rejoicings were over, he departed with his bride, after many courtesies had been exchanged on both sides.

The castle was of Moorish design, in white marble, erected on a promontory and surrounded by orange-trees.

Terraces of flowers extended to the shell-strewn shores of a beautiful bay. Behind the castle spread a fan-shaped forest. The sky was always blue, and the trees were swayed in turn by the ocean-breeze and by the winds that blew from the mountains that closed the horizon.

Light entered the apartments through the incrustations of the walls. High, reed-like columns supported the ceiling of the cupolas, decorated in imitation of stalactites.

Fountains played in the spacious halls; the courts were inlaid with mosaic; there were festooned partitions and a great profusion of architectural fancies; and everywhere reigned a silence so deep that the swish of a sash or the echo of a sigh could be distinctly heard.

Julian now had renounced war. Surrounded by a peaceful people, he remained idle, receiving every day a throng of subjects who came and knelt before him and kissed his hand in Oriental fashion.

Clad in sumptuous garments, he would gaze out of the window and think of his past exploits; and wish that he might again run in the desert in pursuit of ostriches and gazelles, hide among the bamboos to watch for leopards, ride through forests filled with rhinoceroses, climb the most inaccessible peaks in order to have a better aim at the eagles, and fight the polar bears on the icebergs of the northern sea.

Sometimes, in his dreams, he fancied himself like Adam in the midst of Paradise, surrounded by all the beasts; by merely extending his arm, he was able to kill them; or else they filed past him, in pairs, by order of size, from the lions and the elephants to the ermines and the ducks, as on the day they entered Noah's Ark.

Hidden in the shadow of a cave, he aimed unerring arrows at them; then came others and still others, until he awoke, wild-eyed.

Princes, friends of his, invited him to their meets, but he always refused their invitations, because he thought that by this kind of penance he might possibly avert the threatened misfortune; it seemed to him that the fate of his parents depended on his refusal to

slaughter animals. But he suffered because he could not see them, and his other desire was growing well-nigh unbearable.

In order to divert his mind, his wife had dancers and jugglers come to the castle.

She went abroad with him in an open litter; at other times, stretched out on the edge of a boat, they watched for hours the fish disport themselves in the water, which was as clear as the sky. Often she playfully threw flowers at him or nestling at his feet she played melodies on an old mandolin; then, clasping her hands on his shoulder, she would inquire tremulously: "What troubles thee, my dear lord?"

He would not reply, or else he would burst into tears; but at last, one day, he confessed his fearful dread.

His wife scorned the idea and reasoned wisely with him: probably his father and mother were dead; and even if he should ever see them again, through what chance, to what end, would he arrive at this abomination? Therefore, his fears were groundless, and he should hunt again.

Julian listened to her and smiled, but he could not bring himself to yield to his desire.

One August evening when they were in their bedchamber, she having just retired and he being about to kneel in prayer, he heard the yelping of a fox and light footsteps under the window; and he thought he saw things in the dark that looked like animals. The temptation was too strong. He seized his quiver.

His wife appeared astonished.

"I am obeying you," quoth he, "and I shall be back at sunrise."

However, she feared that some calamity would happen. But he reassured her and departed, surprised at her illogical moods.

A short time afterwards, a page came to announce that two strangers desired, in the absence of the lord of the castle, to see its mistress at once.

Soon a stooping old man and an aged woman entered the room; their coarse garments were covered with dust and each leaned on a stick.

They grew bold enough to say that they brought Julian news of his parents. She leaned out of the bed to listen to them. But after glancing at each other, the old people asked her whether he ever referred to them and if he still loved them.

"Oh! yes!" she said.

Then they exclaimed:

"We are his parents!" and they sat themselves down, for they were very tired.

But there was nothing to show the young wife that her husband was their son.

They proved it by describing to her the birthmarks he had on his body. Then she jumped out of bed, called a page, and ordered that a repast be served to them.

But although they were very hungry, they could scarcely eat, and she observed surreptitiously how their lean fingers trembled whenever they lifted their cups.

They asked a hundred questions about their son, and she answered each one of them, but she was careful not to refer to the terrible idea that concerned them.

When he failed to return, they had left their château; and had wandered for several years, following vague indications but without losing hope.

So much money had been spent at the tolls of the rivers and in inns, to satisfy the rights of princes and the demands of highwaymen, that now their purse was quite empty and they were obliged to beg. But what did it matter, since they were about to clasp again their son in their arms? They lauded his happiness in having such a beautiful wife, and did not tire of looking at her and kissing her.

The luxuriousness of the apartment astonished them; and the old man, after examining the walls, inquired why they bore the coat-of-arms of the Emperor of Occitania.

"He is my father," she replied.

And he marvelled and remembered the prediction of the gipsy, while his wife meditated upon the words the hermit had spoken to her. The glory of their son was undoubtedly only the dawn of eternal splendours, and the old people remained awed while the light from the candelabra on the table fell on them.

In the heyday of youth, both had been extremely handsome. The mother had not lost her hair, and bands of snowy whiteness framed her cheeks; and the father, with his stalwart figure and long beard, looked like a carved image.

Julian's wife prevailed upon them not to wait for him. She put them in her bed and closed the curtains; and they both fell asleep. The day broke and outdoors the little birds began to chirp.

Meanwhile, Julian had left the castle grounds and walked nervously through the forest, enjoying the velvety softness of the grass and the balminess of the air.

The shadow of the trees fell on the earth. Here and there, the moonlight flecked the glades and Julian feared to advance, because he mistook the silvery light for water and the tranquil surface of the pools for grass. A great stillness reigned everywhere, and he failed to see any of the beasts that only a moment ago were prowling around the castle. As he walked on, the woods grew thicker, and the darkness more impenetrable. Warm winds, filled with enervating perfumes, caressed him; he sank into masses of dead leaves, and after a while he leaned against an oak-tree to rest and catch his breath.

Suddenly a body blacker than the surrounding darkness sprang from behind the tree. It was a wild boar. Julian did not have time to stretch his bow, and he bewailed the fact as if it were some great misfortune. Presently, having left the woods, he beheld a wolf slinking along a hedge.

He aimed an arrow at him. The wolf paused, turned his head and quietly continued on his way. He trotted along, always keeping at the same distance, pausing now and then to look around and resuming his flight as soon as an arrow was aimed in his direction.

In this way Julian traversed an apparently endless plain, then sand-hills, and at last found himself on a plateau that dominated a great stretch of land. Large flat stones were interspersed among crumbling vaults; bones and skeletons covered the ground, and here and there some mouldy crosses stood desolate. But presently, shapes moved in the darkness of the tombs, and from them came panting, wild-eyed hyenas. They approached him and smelled him, grinning hideously and disclosing their gums. He whipped out

his sword, but they scattered in every direction and continuing their swift, limping gallop, disappeared in a cloud of dust.

Some time afterwards, in a ravine, he encountered a wild bull, with threatening horns, pawing the sand with his hoofs. Julian thrust his lance between his dewlaps. But his weapon snapped as if the beast were made of bronze; then he closed his eyes in anticipation of his death. When he opened them again, the bull had vanished.

Then his soul collapsed with shame. Some supernatural power destroyed his strength, and he set out for home through the forest. The woods were a tangle of creeping plants that he had to cut with his sword, and while he was thus engaged, a weasel slid between his feet, a panther jumped over his shoulder, and a serpent wound itself around an ash-tree.

Among its leaves was a monstrous jackdaw that watched Julian intently, and here and there, between the branches, appeared great, fiery sparks as if the sky were raining all its stars upon the forest. But the sparks were the eyes of wild-cats, owls, squirrels, monkeys and parrots.

Julian aimed his arrows at them, but the feathered weapons lighted on the leaves of the trees and looked like white butterflies. He threw stones at them; but the missiles did not strike, and fell to the ground. Then he cursed himself, and howled imprecations, and in his rage he could have struck himself.

Then all the beasts he had pursued appeared, and formed a narrow circle around him. Some sat on their hind-quarters, while others stood at full height. And Julian remained among them, transfixed with terror and absolutely unable to move. By a supreme

effort of his will-power, he took a step forward; those that perched in the trees opened their wings, those that trod the earth moved their limbs, and all accompanied him.

The hyenas strode in front of him, the wolf and the wild boar brought up the rear. On his right, the bull swung its head and on his left the serpent crawled through the grass; while the panther, arching its back, advanced with velvety footfalls and long strides. Julian walked as slowly as possible, so as not to irritate them, while in the depth of the bushes he could distinguish porcupines, foxes, vipers, jackals, and bears.

He began to run; the brutes followed him. The serpent hissed, the malodorous beasts frothed at the mouth, the wild boar rubbed his tusks against his heels, and the wolf scratched the palms of his hands with the hairs of his snout. The monkeys pinched him and made faces, the weasel rolled over his feet. A bear knocked his cap off with its huge paw, and the panther disdainfully dropped an arrow it was about to put in its mouth.

Irony seemed to incite their sly actions. As they watched him out of the corners of their eyes, they seemed to meditate a plan of revenge, and Julian, who was deafened by the buzzing of the insects, bruised by the wings and tails of the birds, choked by the stench of animal breaths, walked with outstretched arms and closed lids, like a blind man, without even the strength to beg for mercy.

The crowing of a cock vibrated in the air. Other cocks responded; it was day; and Julian recognised the top of his palace rising above the orange-trees.

Then, on the edge of a field, he beheld some red partridges fluttering around a stubble-field. He unfastened his cloak and threw it over them like a net. When he lifted it, he found only a bird that had been dead a long time and was decaying.

This disappointment irritated him more than all the others. The thirst for carnage stirred afresh within him; animals failing him, he desired to slaughter men.

He climbed the three terraces and opened the door with a blow of his fist; but at the foot of the staircase, the memory of his beloved wife softened his heart. No doubt she was asleep, and he would go up and surprise her. Having removed his sandals, he unlocked the door softly and entered.

The stained windows dimmed the pale light of dawn. Julian stumbled over some garments lying on the floor and a little further on, he knocked against a table covered with dishes. "She must have eaten," he thought; so he advanced cautiously towards the bed which was concealed by the darkness in the back of the room. When he reached the edge, he leaned over the pillow where the two heads were resting close together and stooped to kiss his wife. His mouth encountered a man's beard.

He fell back, thinking he had become crazed; then he approached the bed again and his searching fingers discovered some hair which seemed to be very long. In order to convince himself that he was mistaken, he once more passed his hand slowly over the pillow. But this time he was sure that it was a beard and that a man was there! a man lying beside his wife!

Flying into an ungovernable passion, he sprang upon them with his drawn dagger, foaming, stamping and howling like a wild beast. After a while he stopped.

The corpses, pierced through the heart, had not even moved. He listened attentively to the two death-rattles, they were almost alike, and as they grew fainter, another voice, coming from far away, seemed to continue them. Uncertain at first, this plaintive voice came nearer and nearer, grew louder and louder and presently he recognised, with a feeling of abject terror, the bellowing of the great black stag.

And as he turned around, he thought he saw the spectre of his wife standing at the threshold with a light in her hand.

The sound of the murder had aroused her. In one glance she understood what had happened and fled in horror, letting the candle drop from her hand. Julian picked it up.

His father and mother lay before him, stretched on their backs, with gaping wounds in their breasts; and their faces, the expression of which was full of tender dignity, seemed to hide what might be an eternal secret.

Splashes and blotches of blood were on their white skin, on the bed-clothes, on the floor, and on an ivory Christ which hung in the alcove. The scarlet reflection of the stained window, which just then was struck by the sun, lighted up the bloody spots and appeared to scatter them around the whole room. Julian walked toward the corpses, repeating to himself and trying to believe that he was mistaken, that it was not possible, that there are often inexplicable likenesses.

At last he bent over to look closely at the old man and he saw, between the half-closed lids, a dead pupil that scorched him like fire. Then he went

over to the other side of the bed, where the other corpse lay, but the face was partly hidden by bands of white hair. Julian slipped his finger beneath them and raised the head, holding it at arm's length to study its features, while, with his other hand he lifted the torch. Drops of blood oozed from the mattress and fell one by one upon the floor.

At the close of the day, he appeared before his wife, and in a changed voice commanded her first not to answer him, not to approach him, not even to look at him, and to obey, under the penalty of eternal damnation, every one of his orders, which were irrevocable.

The funeral was to be held in accordance with the written instructions he had left on a chair in the death-chamber.

He left her his castle, his vassals, all his worldly goods, without keeping even his clothes or his sandals, which would be found at the top of the stairs.

She had obeyed the will of God in bringing about his crime, and accordingly she must pray for his soul, since henceforth he should cease to exist.

The dead were buried sumptuously in the chapel of a monastery which it took three days to reach from the castle. A monk wearing a hood that covered his head followed the procession alone, for nobody dared to speak to him. And during the mass, he lay flat on the floor with his face downward and his arms stretched out at his sides.

After the burial, he was seen to take the road leading into the mountains. He looked back several times, and finally passed out of sight.

III.

He left the country and begged his daily bread on his way.

He stretched out his hand to the horsemen he met in the roads, and humbly approached the harvesters in the fields; or else remained motionless in front of the gates of castles; and his face was so sad that he was never turned away.

Obeying a spirit of humility, he related his history to all men, and they would flee from him and cross themselves. In villages through which he had passed before, the good people bolted the doors, threatened him, and threw stones at him as soon as they recognised him. The more charitable ones placed a bowl on the window-sill and closed the shutters in order to avoid seeing him.

Repelled and shunned by everyone, he avoided his fellow-men and nourished himself with roots and plants, stray fruits and shells which he gathered along the shores.

Often, at the bend of a hill, he could perceive a mass of crowded roofs, stone spires, bridges, towers and narrow streets, from which arose a continual murmur of activity.

The desire to mingle with men impelled him to enter the city. But the gross and beastly expression of their faces, the noise of their industries and the indifference of their remarks, chilled his very heart. On holidays, when the cathedral bells rang out at daybreak and filled the people's hearts with gladness, he watched the inhabitants coming out of their dwellings, the dancers in the public squares, the fountains of

ale, the damask hangings spread before the houses of princes; and then, when night came, he would peer through the windows at the long tables where families gathered and where grandparents held little children on their knees; then sobs would rise in his throat and he would turn away and go back to his haunts.

He gazed with yearning at the colts in the pastures, the birds in their nests, the insects on the flowers; but they all fled from him at his approach and hid or flew away. So he sought solitude. But the wind brought to his ears sounds resembling death-rattles; the tears of the dew reminded him of heavier drops, and every evening, the sun would spread blood in the sky, and every night, in his dreams, he lived over his parricide.

He made himself a hair-cloth lined with iron spikes. On his knees, he ascended every hill that was crowned with a chapel. But the unrelenting thought spoiled the splendour of the tabernacles and tortured him in the midst of his penances.

He did not rebel against God, who had inflicted his action, but he despaired at the thought that he had committed it.

He had such a horror of himself that he took all sorts of risks. He rescued paralytics from fire and children from the waves. But the ocean scorned him and the flames spared him. Time did not allay his torment, which became so intolerable that he resolved to die.

One day, while he was stooping over a fountain to judge of its depth, an old man appeared on the other side. He wore a white beard and his appearance was so lamentable that Julian could not keep

back his tears. The old man also was weeping. Without recognising him, Julian remembered confusedly a face that resembled his. He uttered a cry; for it was his father who stood before him; and he gave up all thought of taking his own life.

Thus weighted down by his recollections, he travelled through many countries and arrived at a river which was dangerous, because of its violence and the slime that covered its shores. Since a long time nobody had ventured to cross it.

The bow of an old boat, whose stern was buried in the mud, showed among the reeds. Julian, on examining it closely, found a pair of oars and hit upon the idea of devoting his life to the service of his fellow-men.

He began by establishing on the bank of the river a sort of road which would enable people to approach the edge of the stream; he broke his nails in his efforts to lift enormous stones which he pressed against the pit of his stomach in order to transport them from one point to another; he slipped in the mud, he sank into it, and several times was on the very brink of death.

Then he took to repairing the boat with débris of vessels, and afterwards built himself a hut with putty and trunks of trees.

When it became known that a ferry had been established, passengers flocked to it. They hailed him from the opposite side by waving flags, and Julian would jump into the boat and row over. The craft was very heavy, and the people loaded it with all sorts of baggage, and beasts of burden, who reared with fright, thereby adding greatly to the confusion. He asked nothing for his trouble; some gave him left-

over victuals which they took from their sacks or worn-out garments which they could no longer use.

The brutal ones hurled curses at him, and when he rebuked them gently they replied with insults, and he was content to bless them.

A little table, a stool, a bed made of dead leaves and three earthen bowls were all he possessed. Two holes in the wall served as windows. On one side, as far as the eye could see, stretched barren wastes studded here and there with pools of water; and in front of him flowed the greenish waters of the wide river. In the spring, a putrid odour arose from the damp sod. Then fierce gales lifted clouds of dust that blew everywhere, even settling in the water and in one's mouth. A little later swarms of mosquitoes appeared, whose buzzing and stinging continued night and day. After that, came frightful frosts which communicated a stone-like rigidity to everything and inspired one with an insane desire for meat. Months passed when Julian never saw a human being. He often closed his lids and endeavored to recall his youth;—he beheld the courtyard of a castle, with greyhounds stretched out on a terrace, an armoury filled with valets, and under a bower of vines a youth with blond curls, sitting between an old man wrapped in furs and a lady with a high cap; presently the corpses rose before him, and then he would throw himself face downward on his cot and sob:

"Oh! poor father! poor mother! poor mother!" and would drop into a fitful slumber in which the terrible visions recurred.

One night he thought that some one was calling to him in his sleep. He listened intently, but could hear nothing save the roaring of the waters.

But the same voice repeated: "Julian!"

It proceeded from the opposite shore, a fact which appeared extraordinary to him, considering the breadth of the river.

The voice called a third time: "Julian!"

And the high-pitched tones sounded like the ringing of a church-bell.

Having lighted his lantern, he stepped out of his cabin. A frightful storm raged. The darkness was complete and was illuminated here and there only by the white waves leaping and tumbling.

After a moment's hesitation, he untied the rope. The water presently grew smooth and the boat glided easily to the opposite shore, where a man was waiting.

He was wrapped in a torn piece of linen; his face was like a chalk mask, and his eyes were redder than glowing coals. When Julian held up his lantern he noticed that the stranger was covered with hideous sores; but notwithstanding this, there was in his attitude something like the majesty of a king.

As soon as he stepped into the boat, it sank deep into the water, borne downward by his weight; then it rose again and Julian began to row.

With each stroke of the oars, the force of the waves raised the bow of the boat. The water, which was blacker than ink, ran furiously along the sides. It formed abysses and then mountains, over which the boat glided, then it fell into yawning depths where, buffeted by the wind, it whirled around and around.

Julian leaned far forward and, bracing himself with his feet, bent backwards so as to bring his whole strength into play. Hail-stones cut his hands, the rain ran down his back, the velocity of the wind suffocated him. He stopped rowing and let the boat

drift with the tide. But realising that an important matter was at stake, a command which could not be disregarded, he picked up the oars again; and the rattling of the tholes mingled with the clamourings of the storm.

The little lantern burned in front of him. Sometimes birds fluttered past it and obscured the light. But he could distinguish the eyes of the leper who stood at the stern, as motionless as a column.

And the trip lasted a long, long time.

When they reached the hut, Julian closed the door and saw the man sit down on the stool. The species of shroud that was wrapped around him had fallen below his loins, and his shoulders and chest and lean arms were hidden under blotches of scaly pustules. Enormous wrinkles crossed his forehead. Like a skeleton, he had a hole instead of a nose, and from his bluish lips came breath which was fetid and as thick as mist.

"I am hungry," he said.

Julian set before him what he had, a piece of pork and some crusts of coarse bread.

After he had devoured them, the table, the bowl, and the handle of the knife bore the same scales that covered his body.

Then he said: "I thirst!"

Julian fetched his jug of water and when he lifted it, he smelled an aroma that dilated his nostrils and filled his heart with gladness. It was wine; what a boon! but the leper stretched out his arm and emptied the jug at one draught.

Then he said: "I am cold!"

Julian ignited a bundle of ferns that lay in the middle of the hut. The leper approached the fire

and, resting on his heels, began to warm himself; his whole frame shook and he was failing visibly; his eyes grew dull, his sores began to break, and in a faint voice he whispered:

"Thy bed!"

Julian helped him gently to it, and even laid the sail of his boat over him to keep him warm.

The leper tossed and moaned. The corners of his mouth were drawn up over his teeth; an accelerated death-rattle shook his chest and with each one of his aspirations, his stomach touched his spine. At last, he closed his eyes.

"I feel as if ice were in my bones! Lay thyself beside me!" he commanded. Julian took off his garments; and then, as naked as on the day he was born, he got into the bed; against his thigh he could feel the skin of the leper, and it was colder than a serpent and as rough as a file.

He tried to encourage the leper, but he only whispered:

"Oh! I am about to die! Come closer to me and warm me! Not with thy hands! No! with thy whole body."

So Julian stretched himself out upon the leper, lay on him, lips to lips, chest to chest.

Then the leper clasped him close and presently his eyes shone like stars; his hair lengthened into sunbeams; the breath of his nostrils had the scent of roses; a cloud of incense rose from the hearth, and the waters began to murmur harmoniously; an abundance of bliss, a superhuman joy, filled the soul of the swooning Julian, while he who clasped him to his breast grew and grew until his head and his feet touched the opposite walls of the cabin. The roof

flew up in the air, disclosing the heavens, and Julian ascended into infinity face to face with our Lord Jesus Christ, who bore him straight to heaven.

And this is the story of Saint Julian the Hospitaller, as it is given on the stained-glass window of a church in my birthplace.